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EDUCATION FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNDERSTANDING

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INTERNATIONAL  
UNDERSTANDING

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*BY* THOMAS R. ADAM

INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION

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## FOREWORD

The focus of public attention upon international affairs since the close of World War II is responsible for the study set forth in the following pages. Hope for a peaceable world—if not within the lifetimes of men and women now in existence on this planet, then within the spans to be accorded to their children or their children's children—has driven home to thoughtful people everywhere the necessity for constructive understanding of international affairs. Such understanding, it is clear, can be attained only through the slow and tedious process of education—education for children certainly, but even more importantly, if the world civilization is to survive the present century, education for adults.

These considerations led the Institute of Adult Education of Teachers College, Columbia University, in cooperation with the American Association for Adult Education, to undertake a study of the forces present in American life that made for possible understanding of international matters. As the study progressed, it became evident that many tons of print put in circulation by well-intentioned organizations



and individuals looking toward international understanding and international peace were being wasted, in that they either flew wide of the mark because of the difficulty of reader-comprehension, or were so designed as to be outside the realities of experience of ordinary persons residing within ordinary American communities. The same general criticism can be aimed at the countless foot-pounds of energy expended by the same well-intentioned persons and organizations in their efforts to drive home the futility and complete lack of necessity of war as a supposed solution to the world's ills.

It seemed to the Institute and its cooperating body, the Association, that a critical analysis of the great movement now in existence in the United States for the ultimate objective of international peace would be in order, particularly if that analysis could take place from the point of view of the ordinary citizen in the ordinary community. While this book is not written for the ordinary citizen, it is definitely directed at the leadership groups within all communities large and small, and in addition, to those responsible for the policies of a multitude of organizations operating at the state, regional and national levels.

Responsibility for the study was placed in the hands of Thomas R. Adam, Research Associate both of the Institute and of the Association, and Associate Professor of Political Science in New York University. Mr. Adam brought to the study not only his twenty years of experience in various forms of adult education, but a considerable understanding of interna-

tional affairs derived from many years spent in countries other than the United States. While the Institute takes full responsibility as publisher, still the data for Mr. Adam's work were gathered through the active cooperation of the American Association for Adult Education. The inclusion of the latter body in the organizations represented in the United States National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization served to emphasize the need for the analysis.

MORSE A. CARTWRIGHT

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PART ONE

PRIVATE INTEREST  
IN MANKIND'S CONCERN

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## I.

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Curiosity about the affairs of one's neighbors is based on self-protection. It is a gentle form of that wary alertness that kept men and women alive before society rose above the jungle level. As such it remains a deep rooted social instinct, neither good nor evil in itself, but capable of infinite adaptation or abuse.

Our kindly, Christian culture has superimposed the ideal tenet of love your neighbor on the primitive instinct to watch your enemy. This sublimation is by no means complete and there remains a residual uneasiness at the thought of strangers within or without our borders. Alien individuals or cultures arouse more anxiety than natural interest in unthinking minds; the normal response, therefore, is to push them out of sight and sense, to react to them emotionally or not at all.

It is a practical error to assume that, given the opportunity, an average citizen is eager and willing to learn about unfamiliar peoples and ways of life. Such knowledge is on the whole disturbing, too unsettling to be sought except under real incentive. In modern society incentives are, of course, many and pressing,



ranging from personal psychological unrests to reasoned social impulses. It remains true, however, that a powerful motive is required to impel the individual to broaden his human outlook beyond the immediate, familiar environment. The susceptibility of large numbers of people, therefore, to common motives urging them to wider curiosities and sympathies will determine their degree of understanding of mankind's affairs.

Insistence on individual motive is a healthy starting point for an enquiry into popular learning about world problems. Why should a man or woman burden his or her mind with difficulties remote from a comfortable environment? Why not wait until the world comes bursting into Plainville rather than risk assured gains by launching Plainville on the uncharted seas of unruly humanity?

To assume that everyone ought to be interested is to plan a campaign without estimating the number of available troops or their condition of loyalty. The inescapable preliminary to all voluntary education is to decide what deep-rooted demands of the people can be met by passing on knowledge in a particular form. When such demands are neither evident nor expressed they should be uncovered through patient analysis, but they may not be assumed. Self-development through learning is a matter of choice; the individual can be assisted by relating learning to the better understanding of immediate, practical problems; neither he nor she can be compelled by force or

suasion to undertake a task that lacks the conviction of personal meaning.

For something to have personal meaning to an ordinary citizen in a normal American community, it should relate either to the advancement of his person, family, or community. It should be within the bounds of direct experience through observation or feeling. The prospect of his own or his neighbors' sons being led to war is an experience of a different order from speculation about the likelihood of civil strife in China. Where the first matter is concerned, demands for fuller understanding, even though time and trouble must be spent in learning, are general and sincere. The second subject may stir uneasiness but it cannot claim importance unless related to issues of immediate concern.

The attitude then of the bulk of the people in this country towards world affairs is basically personal. Where events threaten to impact on habitual life, they will be given the serious attention devoted to private affairs. When happenings are unrecognized as pertinent to a familiar environment, the tendency will be to thrust them aside, or use them as a means of irresponsible, idle speculation.

Popular education in world affairs should acknowledge this fact, refrain from making unreasonable demands on the interest of its clients and devote itself to servicing known needs for information. To achieve this end, the interests of the individual should be aroused at their source, the everyday community en-

vironment. From the point of view of the individual, world happenings lack significance when divorced from everyday matters; their meaning lies in the extension they provide to particular, local problems incapable of solution on community or even national levels.

The need for information on the part of the individual must then always be viewed in terms of specific situations being faced within a familiar framework of time and space. The search for understanding not only starts at home but ventures out into the wide world mainly to garner essential material that will be of practical use to solve home problems. It is not merely a man's treasure that lies where his heart is, but also his power of sympathetic observation and realistic deduction.

The common experience of mankind, both in the past and present, is that "village" mentality is the norm, metropolitan curiosity an exception, and cosmopolitan breadth a rarity.<sup>1</sup> This might seem to indicate that all efforts to spread understanding on world

<sup>1</sup>A survey made by the British Government in 1943 of the outside leisure interests of the working class population revealed that fifty-two per cent of those sampled said their main spare time interests were connected with the home. Sixteen per cent had leisure interests equally divided between home and outside world and only twenty per cent claimed that their main interest lay outside the home. Though this survey illustrates only the viewpoint of wage earners in preponderantly urban areas in the United Kingdom, parallel conclusions would probably be reached by similar sampling techniques in any highly industrialized country in the western world. The survey entitled "The Outside Leisure Interests of a Selected Group of the Working Population" Government Social Survey (unpublished) is quoted in "Planning No. 263" March 21, 1947 issued by Political and Economic Planning, London.

affairs throughout the rank and file of a nation are bound to be fruitless. The assumption is unwarranted. A naive faith in the limitless range of the average citizen's sympathies and interests will certainly lead to the disappointing failure of many ambitious programs, but faulty planning affords no proof of the hopelessness of any objective. A realistic approach to the task of acquainting large numbers of people with problems beyond their familiar environment would accept the provincialism of the human mind as a practical starting point. World affairs are after all the sum of myriads of local tensions and can be dealt with as sensibly, perhaps more sensibly, on the level of local consequences as on the heights of diplomatic maneuverings.

## II.

In an American community, the individual is under the obligation of managing his own affairs, an obligation carried out through democratic processes of self-government. These processes work, on the whole, by virtue of the ability of citizens to understand and pass practical judgment on social issues requiring action. Where issues arise that lie outside the citizen's capacity to judge and act, the democratic and, therefore, American solution to social life is threatened. The practical remedy for the overcomplications of a wide society is, of course, the principle of representation. The homogeneous community chooses the individual representative who will carry its point of view into higher bodies where problems beyond the scope of the ordinary man are judged and resolved. For this system to retain its life it is essential that the community should possess a vigorous viewpoint on how high matters of state may affect their local needs even though they lack the knowledge and means to understand such questions in their entirety. Representative democracy is a pyramid based on local reactions to the political environment; remove enough of the

lower blocks and the majestic apex will crash in ruin.

The ordinary citizen, then, cannot tolerate the existence of public policies affecting his community on which he is unable to pass judgment through ignorance or lack of interest. Such "foreign" elements rob the citizen of mastery over his immediate affairs, reducing citizenship to a subjection contrary to American custom and habit. A powerful and almost universal desire to understand and take action on any matter touching practical community life must be assumed as native to the American character.

World affairs can be said to intrude on the individual almost against his will as external limitations on his ability to influence and control an immediate social environment. It is this irritant quality that provokes general attention to the subject once the practical implications are made clear. Freedom in our democratic sense is impossible so long as outside forces can interrupt or overrule a community's control over its own social structure. The restless struggle for liberty, characteristic of, if not peculiar to, the American people drives men and women to seek mastery over ever widening circles of social relationships. The world has come late into American communities hidden behind the voluminous robes of the nation; that it has at last arrived and stands forbidding on the humblest village square few sober people would now care to deny.

It is enough, nowadays, to claim a citizen's right to the free ordering of one's own affairs to be plunged into a maelstrom of judgment and action on world

policies. That this takes place on a representative level makes it none the less painful for the individual whose personal future and comfort are clearly involved.

Granted that the will to stir oneself on world policies lies latent in the modern citizen, the question remains as to how this willingness may be brought into active play in social life. This is a matter of organization by the responsible institutions of democracy, the educational hierarchy and the political system. Outlets for individual feeling need to be contrived through educational patterns and opportunities for political action on practical subjects.

The groping of statesmen to achieve this awakening of the common man on the world scene is well expressed by His Britannic Majesty's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin:

"The thing which is constantly before me is the extent to which ordinary men and women in all countries are thinking, arguing and expressing their views about the way to prevent another war.

"There is a great human urge throughout the world to prevent war and I believe it has reached the pitch of passion among the people. This very urge, properly crystallized and directed into right channels, gives us the greatest chance we've ever had of developing a great moral force for observance of international law. . . .

"There have been two stages in the process by which foreign affairs will cease to be the prerogative of the few and have become the responsibility of

the many. The first stage, mainly getting<sup>1</sup> the people to take an interest in and understand questions of foreign policy was not enough. There was a tendency between the two great wars for the people, politicians and statesmen to think they had only to say they did not want war and they wanted peace for peace to prevail without any effort or asserted watchfulness on their part.

"The second state which I think we are only just breaking into now is the universal comprehension that words are not enough and that personal effort and vigil by the citizens are as necessary to foreign affairs as in home questions. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Universal comprehension of the need to judge and act in regard to world affairs is a high soaring goal. There is scant proof of it ever having been achieved even in the most highly organized societies and still less evidence than any substantial number of isolated individuals are capable of the effort.

Both need and motive for individual understanding may exist as a powerful force, but through lack of means the pressure may dissipate itself in confused frustration. Communities pyramiding up to states and nations can alone provide the means whereby the individual can grasp his wider role in the world. Knowledge of this type is a part of social experience and must result from the relations of the individual to a specific community. It can be described as a social service rendered by the community; a form of public

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from a speech delivered by Foreign Secretary Bevin to the Foreign Press Association November 11, 1946 as reported by the *New York Times* November 12, 1946.



communication born out of the workings of society itself.

Public communication may manifest itself in any community through a wide variety of forms. Local custom, politics, newspapers, particular religious habits and by no means least, organized education, all serve to create a common social approach to individual problems. Without this help from his fellows, an individual can never approximate personal freedom in relation to his social environment. Self-expression is made possible only through an established network of collective institutions.

This study is limited to the liberty of judgment and action in world affairs granted by a single one of these instruments, education for the adult. From the standpoint of any individual, it may or may not be a decisive influence; in the view, however, of those especially concerned with making world affairs a matter of public attention, this instrument is of major importance. Education, unlike the Press or local customs, is primarily a social and intellectual discipline, which once accepted develops in the individual capacities to understand and act in accordance with a general pattern of society. The voluntary acceptance by large numbers of citizens of continuing education in world affairs would hold the greatest likelihood of reaching that goal of "universal comprehension" Mr. Bevin considers essential to world security.

In practice, however, education, particularly adult education, is a relationship between the individual and the community carried out by community insti-

tutions shaped to the habits of the locality. World affairs, therefore, must find their roots in some combination of local problems before they can be wrought into the educational framework of specific communities.

An unusual illustration of how a small community may choose to educate itself about the world was reported in the *New York Times* of November 21, 1946. Port Byron, New York, a rural community of nine hundred and sixty-one souls, sent as inquiring reporter to the headquarters of the United Nations a sixteen year old high school boy armed with carefully thought out questions supplied by representative citizens. The Master of the Port Byron Grange wanted to know what the rest of the world was doing about famine relief; the head of the local bank and a clothing merchant asked whether the United Nations was probing into international causes and effects of depressions; high school students wondered whether small contributions from individual citizens all over the world would not create feelings of greater loyalty to the United Nations. Carrying these local queries directly to high officials of the world organization, Port Byron's reporter obtained answers that had pertinent meaning to his community.

Port Byron can hardly be said to have set a pattern that can be usefully followed by every small community. High officials have duties too pressing to answer directly every question from their world constituents. On the other hand, the enterprise of Port Byron has shown to those who care to note that the

practical interests of a small rural town do extend into the heart of world organization. The questions were there, meaningful, definite questions related to local judgment and action and all the citizens required was machinery to have them answered with impartial authority.

The provision of machinery to supply answers on this level is primarily an educational problem. It is one which this nation has both the scholarship and distributing skills to solve if some means can be found to incite and collect questions from their original source, the natural communities in which the nation is organized. To accomplish this, it must be firmly accepted that world affairs begin at home, and the locality itself should pose the problems raised by its impact with the world. Service organizations, supported by scholarship and voluntary funds should then shoulder the burden of generalizing the questions flowing in from communities and of supplying material that, processed through local discussions and study, may furnish sufficient grounds for judgment and action.

Under this conception, the individual's motive to have concern in mankind's affairs would first find root in community problems and from there reach out to wider fields through the voluntary discipline of education. In this way, social pressure and intellectual curiosity would unite in a task of self-development, development to the rank of citizens of the world.

PART TWO

THE COMMUNITY IS  
IN THE WORLD

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## I.

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Awareness of social forces develops in the individual through the sharp discipline and experience of membership in a community. The depth and direction of this awareness then will bear strong relation to the demands the community is able to make on its members. An active, well organized community will enforce alertness and provide constant pressure for a reaching out beyond its own bounds to establish its place and meaning in the outside world. The dormant community on the other hand, will content itself with the homogeneity of ignorance, permitting its citizens the luxury of introverted indifference. The gateway to mature understanding of the world is in general held by the community or at least conditioned for the individual by the pattern set by his community group.

A practical grasp of America's place in the world can be vouched to the people in general more naturally through their communities than in any other way. The proper channel of communication (a concept dear to the official mind) is from world to nation, nation to community and as a final key link, community to individual. It is always tempting to break the

hieratic chain; to persuade, cozen or call to action the heterogeneous mass of the people by direct appeal from some vantage point bereft of traditional responsibility. Results from such a short circuit can be explosive, dazzling, a transitory shock to public opinion; steady, dependable illumination of the public mind, however, is seldom achieved in this way.

The value of following the true channel of communication lies in its power to link the world view with the broader stream of everyday affairs that make up the business of society. Divorced from immediate, responsible sources, world events may stimulate and excite, but they affect the individual with the unreal fascination of a staged or pictured drama, a performance in which his role is that of the critical spectator. The actor's part is reserved for the neighborhood stage where world protagonists appear only when cast in community terms.

Communication between individual and community is in a tongue that carries the conviction of reality. The constant contact of minds in a like environment tends in time to approximate the ideal of a meeting of like minds. There is, of course, no guarantee that similarity of outlook will broaden or enrich the content of the common mind. Profit from this social communion depends upon the effort that has been put into creating instruments of development out of the casual channels of community intercourse. A deliberate pattern must be imposed on local interests if the wider concerns involved in true freedom are to find adequate expression.

The normal lines of community communication are through social and business intercourse on a level seldom rising above personal gossip. Organization to give purpose and meaning to collective living has always to be imposed from some quarter or another. In an ordinary locality, newspapers, radio, the churches, and publicly fostered discussions are the principal means of disciplining communal thinking. It is these organs of public opinion that are charged with the duty of transforming casual incidents of personal living into meaningful patterns of social life on the national and world level. If they suffer from too narrow and limited a vision they will fail to translate the community experiences of individuals into the understanding required of free men and women.

Public discussion is the instrumentality that most concerns us here. It represents the traditional way in which the discipline of education is maintained and furthered among mature people on the North American continent. All the threads of local gossip, social, economic, and political can be woven by the process of discussion into the whole cloth of community understanding. The discipline of relevance and the effort of private study are needed to create profitable discussion and these imply voluntary self-education. If the organization of discussion groups is carried out effectively by the community as a whole or by its major constituent elements, then an instrument of learning through community life has been forged that will cover most fields of social experience.

It would be arrogant to claim for education and its



tool, discussion, priority over the other means of public understanding, the press, churches, radio, magazines and books, the movies; it may be claimed, however, that discussion bears more of the community stamp than its peers and is consequently the more flexible instrument to relate the individual in a given time and place to the affairs of the outside world. Besides, public discussion, when properly conducted, acts as a catalytic agent to fuse practical knowledge derived from many sources into active understanding.

## II.

When the world casts its shadow over a community, the householder's first thought is for the safety of his home and not for the future of the globe. If a vigorous, collective effort, however, is started for the protection of each by all, the community may easily end up in a counteroffensive to change the course of the world. Whether this can happen and is happening today in countless American cities and towns will determine the likelihood of popular control over this nation's destiny in the world.

Middletown, Ohio, with a population of about thirty-one thousand has provided an illustration of community action for understanding on the problems of world security.<sup>1</sup> Discussion started in a Legion Post and centered round the Quota Force Plan as an alternative to present world armaments. A journalist member carried the subject to a wider public in a series of articles in the *Middletown Journal*. Other members appealed to the interest of community groups, the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Civic

<sup>1</sup> *Crossroads Middletown*, published by Citizens Committee for United Nations Reform, Inc. 16 A. East 62nd St., New York, December 1946.

Association and various business and labor organizations. Sufficient joint interest was aroused to hold a Town Meeting attracting four hundred citizens. The discussion was carried out on a community level by participants including a Negro taxicab owner, a school teacher, a minister, and a university professor. This meeting led to the creation of a Town Meeting Committee charged to consider the Quota Force Plan and other methods for world security and to organize another Town Meeting for wider community discussion.

The net was spread wider by this eager volunteer body. Every form of civic organization was drawn into the picture and the substantial sum of nine hundred dollars collected to finance the second Town Meeting. Outside speakers, including the Governor of the State and Mr. Ely Culbertson, were invited to the meeting which drew a capacity audience of fourteen hundred. As a result of these two meetings, the Middletown Citizens Committee for United Nations Reform emerged as a continuing body that stimulated Town Meetings on the subject in scores of neighboring communities.

This spontaneous stirring of a typical American community to discover and create the kind of world in which it might endure affords some indication of the potential existing throughout the country for active understanding of America's responsibility towards mankind. While the methods adopted may be held superficial and the information gathered incomplete, the central fact remains that the community

showed both the interest and means to organize itself for full public discussion, bringing in on its own initiative outside authorities of standing. In this instance, the ordinary citizen of Middletown is entitled to view his community as a gateway to a wider association of mankind.

Another example of the community's power to act as a focus for world affairs has been given by the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore. The program, sponsored by the Library on the suggestion of the American Library Association, was centered round the potential use or abuse of atomic energy.<sup>2</sup> The Maryland Academy of Sciences gave advice and financial help and the project soon involved hundreds of groups throughout the city, including scientists at Johns Hopkins University, newspapers, commercial artists, an airplane manufacturing corporation, and many clubs and organizations.

The final achievement took the form of a vivid and informing exhibit in the central library attracting a daily audience of around three thousand and serving as an introduction to five Sunday lectures before capacity audiences. Panel discussions, film showings, and exhibits of reading material in all twenty-six of the branch libraries spread information throughout the whole city. This five-week educational campaign originated in the public library, but its outstanding success must be attributed to the anxiety of the whole community to acquaint itself with facts that seemed

<sup>2</sup> "Enoch Pratt Programs," article on Atomic Information, Vol. 2 No. 2 February 20, 1947, published by National Committee on Atomic Information.

vital to its existence. Here again, the individual citizen had his eyes drawn to the world through the spyglass of communal interest.

Attracting attention to the hidden link between immediate neighborhood problems and the general concerns of mankind is a primary step in wide education on world affairs. It is, however, no more than a first step, for interest is not transfigured into education by any inevitable process of nature. The business of arousing citizens to perils that threaten their community, of painting a world view that lowers menacingly over settled habits of security may effect no more than the exchange of comfortable ignorance for uneasy confusion.

Nothing short of understanding of key issues will permit the individual to pass effective judgment on events and so maintain the character of a free man. The means to this necessary understanding is adult education, requiring personal effort, organized methods and reliable sources of information. Opinions, of course, may be decked and tricked for mass consumption by all the devices of modern publicity which seek to by-pass comprehension through easy assaults on trigger emotions. Public will to action can unquestionably be aroused by such means but only at the cost of basic freedoms. Where the power to form a true judgment from facts is withheld, the individual becomes the puppet of a controlling group.

In the daily affairs of his neighborhood the citizen has freer rein to exercise personal judgment than in

mass matters where a passive role is almost enforced. Social education then is naturally sought through community instrumentalities that protect private judgment and free discussion. If machinery is present in the community, the need for indoctrination from outside dwindles to a negligible point. Opinions can be won for the price of effort but not at the cost of freedom.

The means possessed by average communities to foster the process of continuous education must weigh heavily on America's chance to master her world environment. If mankind's affairs can be made an extension of neighborhood business then they will be judged by free men with all the care they give to their personal concerns. The need which the community must satisfy to bring this about is firstly, opportunity for free discussion with one's equals, and secondly access to reliable information on the subject under discussion. The bringing together of these two elements creates an instrument of adult education, older than Socrates and more enduring than any political system.

Free judgment springs from the soil of healthy discussion and no other. Of course every individual in his social aspect is a many-faced character, debating with himself as churchman, trader, sportsman, and family man in varied and, often, discordant tongues. These shaving-mirror or dressing-table soliloquies, however, seldom reach the poetic logic and coherence of Hamlet. Open talk is needed to give birth to under-

standing. The reflection of oneself found in fellow beings provides a better whetstone to the mind than a grimace in a looking glass.

The citizen's character is fulfilled in his community associations. As a social creature he exists as a composite balance of family man, church member, clubman, hobbyist, businessman, or trade unionist. Each of these and other groups plays its part in forming his final judgment as a citizen; if any one should be lax or narrow in its outlook a barrier is put in the way of full understanding.

For continuous educational development ideas must be constantly exchanged and discussed within the many natural groups in which men and women find their true natures. When a factory worker seeks to know his rightful place in the world as a whole, he needs to hear the opinions of fellow workers in his union local, compare them with the views of the members of his church, adjust them with the thinking of his other interest groups and reach a free decision in terms of his own composite character as a social being. Whether or not he is given the opportunity to do this will depend on the organization of these groupings for the general discussion of ideas. A narrow efficiency along action lines on the part of any or all of his groupings may deprive the individual of his proper medium for the translation of opinion into understanding.

Continuous social education then is largely the responsibility of everyday action groups, associations for the normal purposes of life. Organization within these

groups at all levels for specifically educational purposes is a duty owed to the community as a whole.

To cite one example, trade union locals claim authority over one part of a worker's life. If they perform their tasks of organization and rule without full counsel and consent of their members, they may be accused justly of tyranny. Most unions strive honestly for democratic processes, yet in their eagerness for action and unanimity they may neglect to provide their members with all the facts essential to a free judgment. There is no organizational short cut to informed understanding that can safely by-pass a well organized program of mutual education. World affairs may be and often are vital factors in industrial situations facing trade union members. It is an inescapable responsibility of the union itself to see that its members are adequately informed before they are called to act directly or indirectly in some local situation that is only part of a wider national or international problem.

The same argument may be applied to business associations, clubs, and even churches. In the case of the latter, spiritual authority may be held to transcend or even obviate any necessity for secular learning. Neither the national nor local community, however, could safely tolerate such a position if it were ever advanced by organized religion. Great social privileges both as regards property and the protection of law have been granted by the people to the churches. In our dominantly Christian society the social power of the churches is recognized and safeguarded through



law. All power must be matched with equal responsibility in a democracy. Christian churches, therefore, must be held to a duty to make their members capable of judging actual social situations in terms of religious morality.

To achieve this end, more than the inculcation of religious faith is required; patient study combined with free discussion of the actualities of social life on a local, national and world-wide scale is a duty of citizenship for the religious—a rendering unto Caesar.

The tendency of all action groups dealing with one side of human nature, whether it be economic, cultural or spiritual, is to shelve responsibility for the education of the whole man on the shoulders of some imaginary organization vaguely labeled educational interests. No such body is in fact available to the vast majority of mature citizens. Education after school and college is a process of democracy and not a separate division of social life. If it is neglected within the power groups that constitute our society, the exercise of free judgment by individuals must fail. Such a failure cannot be compensated by the creation of the most ingenious political or social machinery; where the power to judge freely has lapsed, tyranny must ensue.

### III.

Enforcement of educational programs within organized action groups is the task of the earthly master of them all, the community itself. Each group, whether it be business association, trade union or club, owes its place and power to the respect or at least tolerance of the general community. The instruments of control possessed by the general body over its constituent members run the gamut from law to ridicule. The object of such control is the maintenance and advancement of democratic freedom.

Communities rooted in democracy, and their number in America is the greatest among the peoples of the world, will discipline their elements to permit of free and full discussion for the education of whole citizens. A business association, for example, pontificating from self-interest on perhaps the influence of tariff policies on local welfare is unlikely to go unchallenged in a healthy neighborhood. A newspaper, a club, trade union or church group may attack its competence, analyzing the narrow viewpoint or ignorance of relevant facts which went to make up its judgment. The issue will be held undecided by public

opinion until other elements, workers, churches and clubs have had their say.

The pressure on action groups to speak intelligently from reliable information and on a community-wide level should not be underrated. It springs from the daily temper of democracy sharpened by hundreds of years of practice. Active associations that deny consciously or unconsciously educational processes to their members exist only as cancers in normal American society.

As a force for the education of mature citizens the normal community must be granted a unique position. In its daily effort to maintain democracy it creates and preserves the true organization for social learning. The educator, in a wider sense than school man, is not separate from his fellows but merely accentuates a process in which all are interested alike. His specific function is that of critic; from special knowledge or interest he may spy weaknesses in the workings of the action groups as educational instruments. It is his primary duty to criticize, suggest, create new forms of activities and in a last resort hold up to general ridicule and contempt any association that shirks the educational responsibilities proper to democratic organizations.

Special educational organizations cutting across the normal lines of interest groups are important and valuable in any community. Their principal function, however, is to stimulate and co-ordinate the discussion processes which must take place inside social groupings. In dealing with world affairs there is particular

need for these unstratified bodies; the sense of the vastness and latent hostility of the outside world draws all the constituent parts of the community together to seek comfort in a common union of ideas and purpose.

An outstanding example of the use of a special educational organization to encourage and co-ordinate community thinking on world affairs is provided by the Cleveland Council on World Affairs. This body bases its program<sup>3</sup> on the assumption that ordinary civic groupings will find themselves involved in discussion of world affairs in so far as they impact on the immediate practical concerns of a particular neighborhood. The stimulation and servicing of such discussions in their natural settings has thus become one of the main services which the Council endeavors to undertake.

A private civic group, perhaps an autonomous<sup>4</sup> or

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin of the Council on World Affairs, Cleveland, Ohio.

<sup>4</sup> The following manifesto for the autonomous group is given by Maria Rogers in an article "United Nations and Local Groups," *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, November, 1946.

1. All of the functions of the face-to-face group—the moral, the creative, and the social—are equally important.
2. Their interrelation and interdependence are organic. Although they can be distinguished for dialectical convenience, the real unity of their functioning must never be forgotten.
3. The social functioning of the individual comprises interrelated activities based on spontaneous interpersonal relationships directed toward three ends: personal satisfactions, private government, and public government.
4. No pressure should be exerted upon the face-to-face group to develop its interest in public government in preference to its interests in its own private concerns and at the expense of its full functioning as the medium through which private government and the community control and develop social action.
5. Due recognition must be accorded the fact that the group, in order to perform its creative function, must be free from any im-

face-to-face group may discover that one or more of their natural interests leads them beyond the local or even national field. Without sacrifice of independence or private purpose they can receive substantial aid from the Council to carry out effective discussions to reach clearer understanding. Program planning assistance suited to their specific needs is provided by a professional staff. Sources of reliable information relevant to their topic, in the form of pamphlets, books, maps, and discussion films are made readily available. If outside speakers are desired, a Speaker's Bureau will arrange the service.

Above all, specialized training is offered the natural leaders of these divergent groups in Leader's Training Clinics. If world affairs is likely to crop up constantly on the agenda of autonomous groups, the advantage of having one of their own members competent to lead discussion is very great.

Besides servicing discussion in neighborhood groups, the Council provides a rallying point for the community as a whole to debate and discuss the impact of the world on their city. Impressive lecture programs, discussion sessions, and an annual institute permit its fourteen hundred members to form an unofficial senate on Cleveland's reactions to foreign policy.

The value of this co-ordinating effort for the promotion of public understanding is recognized in many cities; it is Cleveland's good fortune, however, to post-mediate, short-term, political allegiance and manipulation, whether by government, political parties, social action organizations, or agencies with predetermined goals and programs.

sess a special educational body that recognizes itself as a service organization for the promotion of democratic processes within the action groups that constitute the true community. The Council has taken practical steps towards breaking down the artificial separation of world problems from local affairs. It has treated adult education as a necessary element in the normal business of citizenship.

The community itself is suggested as the most reliable instrument to bring individuals into touch with world affairs because of its power to achieve social education as contrasted with the mere manufacture of opinion. That communities are in fact becoming increasingly conscious of their tutorial relationships towards their members is suggested in a recent review of community programs by Glen Burch:<sup>5</sup>

“The development of criteria that might be used in evaluating a community’s over-all program of adult education activities is contingent, it seems to us, upon the acceptance of a conception of adult education as a community venture; the acceptance of a view that ultimately the provision of adequate opportunities of all kinds to meet the educational needs and interests of the adults in any given community is a community responsibility. . . .

“Since the war there has been a rising demand

<sup>5</sup> “Evaluating Adult Education: Some Principles for a Community-Centered Program,” by Glen Burch, *Adult Education Journal*, April, 1947.

all over the country for cooperative planning and action at the local level. Perhaps the greatest development has been made in the social work field to date, but the demand for a 'community approach to adult education' is being felt in an increasing number of areas. This approach to adult education has gained considerable acceptance in various parts of the country."

## IV.

If we may now assume that effective understanding of world affairs can be achieved through a proper working of democratic processes in much the same way as a good grasp of local problems, one major problem remains to be overcome. The community can provide the natural organization for discussion, it may stimulate its members to collective action, and even discipline selfish, introverted attitudes; it cannot, however, from its own resources provide the proper content for discussion that may lead to practical, policy-making decisions. Only one side of the relevant facts, those relating to local needs, lies ready to the community's hand. The background of world happenings, the terrain of international policies in which national and regional groups perforce operate, must be imported from outside.

World affairs can be made intelligible to all citizens only when satisfactory bonds have been forged between organized communities and specialized centers of information on international problems. The nature of such links, existing or potential, is the proper subject of this enquiry.



One casual answer to the problem is that the pattern of supplying information on world happenings is already set; its basic structure cannot be altered and improvements must be a matter of detail. This viewpoint is based on the assumption that the press, periodicals, books, radio, newsreels provide sufficient material for the formation of practical judgment by any literate individual. As an assumption it appears dangerously shallow. Few people would care to risk life and fortune on opinions fortuitously gleaned from current reading.

The normal person recognizes that a discipline of scholarship above the level of mere literacy is required for the safe application of the printed word to the active solution of civic problems. News and comment, though important, are incomplete factors in the creation of democratic judgment. The vital element of critical choice cannot be provided by mass media, aiming at the presentation of facts already coated over by predigested discussion. To retain the power of free judgment, the *sine qua non* of democracy, citizens must possess the means to sift and apply uncolored facts to their community problems through informal discussion.

In other words, the techniques of continuous education are a working part of the process of democratic living and may not be shelved in the production of opinion without inviting disaster. The dissemination of opinion through newspapers, radio and magazines serves as a useful stimulant to discussion but nothing more. It is neither a substitute for group discussion

nor a factual base for the necessary arguments that precede judgment. Somehow or other facts unheated by tendentious opinion must be made easily available to any community possessing the power of free discussion.

That this need is recognized is proved by the number and scope of national and regional organizations devoted to the task of spreading relevant and unbiased information on world affairs throughout the country. At the heart of this service group lie the parent bodies of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Foreign Policy Association, the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Association for the United Nations, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Institute of Pacific Relations and the Pan-American Institute. On the periphery are vigorous but more temporary bodies admittedly propagating pre-formed opinions on world policies.

The function of these bodies, even in the case of the policy advocating groups, is primarily educational—they are instruments of popular learning for social life. Their work is not to supplement the news but to provide the background of facts necessary to judgment of events for purposes of practical action. Without their aid public discussion of the place of America in the world would be so incomplete as to be almost meaningless.

When viewed as essential links in the democratic process, the character and practices of these bodies become a matter of pressing interest. Though private organizations, they serve a public purpose, holding a

place in the national economy as common carriers of factual information. To estimate the value of their services for the furtherance of popular understanding on world affairs, it is necessary to postulate the nature of the audience that should be reached. If the education of the individual, detached from his social surroundings, is the object then these bodies must rank almost wholly as moral or scholarly agencies. Their influence on the formation of social judgment would be indirect and their place would be among the supplementary aids rather than as part of the direct tools of working democracy.

If, however, it is conceived that these central repositories of information and opinion work through communities and not isolated individuals in mass, they become vested with direct social responsibilities of grave moment. When serving the myriad communities of the nation with the basic content for discussion of world affairs their role is that of private government, of equal importance to a democracy as the public conduct of affairs. The link that ties them to the community as purveyors of facts extends through the processes of community discussion to the formation of social judgment inevitably resulting in political action.

Criteria to evaluate the functioning of these organizations must then include the following major questions. To what extent do they satisfy community needs for basic information on world affairs in a form relevant to local problems and suitable for use in community discussion? Is the information supplied com-

prehensive, authoritative, and unbiased by scholarly standards or clearly labeled as the advocacy of a particular policy?

The organization of the community, itself, as a means of social education combined with its servicing in terms of reliable information by outside bodies appears the only effective method to promote understanding of world affairs among the generality of citizens. This enquiry, then, will seek to establish the nature of the servicing at present being given and to speculate on possibilities for improvement.



**PART THREE**

**CHANNELS OF  
COMMUNICATION**





## I.

A continuous process is at work throughout thousands of communities formulating American opinion on the nation's relations to the rest of the world. The innumerable activities through which this is done cannot be accurately traced or described. Studies, however, have been made of the facilities provided by sample communities for promoting understanding of world affairs. One of the most recent and effective of these surveys is contributed by the Council on Foreign Relations under the title "Community Education in Foreign Affairs."<sup>1</sup> In this work, nineteen American cities report on the diverse ways in which they have organized themselves to direct information and opinion on world happenings into the channels of popular discussion.

The object of an original survey of activities has been achieved by this publication and it is not proposed to attempt more detailed examination. An ac-

<sup>1</sup> *Community Education in Foreign Affairs*—A report on Activities in Nineteen American Cities, by Professor W. Harold Dalglish, Council on Foreign Relations, 1946.

For a more comprehensive but less recent survey, see *Study of International Relations in the U.S.* Survey for 1939 by Edith Ware, Columbia University Press.



count of activities by themselves, however, conveys only casual meaning until they can be fitted into general patterns of social response. A search for such patterns is needed if we are to uncover the main channels of communication, the pipe lines through which the individual may draw enough information to exercise his judgment as member of a sovereign fellowship of citizenry.

Perhaps the most common method of spreading information up to the present has been through the medium of fragmentary interest groups. These associations of like-minded people are to be found in varying forms in every type of community. To cite some examples,<sup>2</sup> Salt Lake City has an American Association of University Women; International Relations Study Group; an Inter-American Group; an International Relations Club; and a Salt Lake City Committee on Foreign Relations. Providence, Rhode Island has a Foreign Policy Association; an International Relations Club; the Providence Committee on Foreign Relations; and the World Affairs Council in Rhode Island; while Tulsa, Oklahoma contents itself with a Foreign Policy Association and the Tulsa Committee on Foreign Relations. Larger communities such as San Francisco, Cleveland, Detroit, and Denver boast formidable lists of groups specializing in the study of world affairs.

Besides these multifarious clubs centered around problems of foreign policy, there exists a weighty

<sup>2</sup> *Community Education in Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, 1946, pp. 19-23.

background of national and regional organizations that handle the discussion of foreign policy as part of their programs on public affairs. These groups include Rotary and Lions International, the League of Women Voters, and innumerable sectional business clubs and women's organizations. They all have in common the technique of group discussion and a serious interest in the formation of public policy. "

This imposing network of discussion groups, never as yet fully listed or evaluated, is probably unmatched in any western democracy. In the freedom of discussion permitted and in access to information from all sources, it is unquestionably unique in the civilized world. With all these advantages within easy reach it might be expected that the American people should show the highest level of interest and understanding of world affairs of any nation on earth. Such an assumption does not appear justified by the obvious facts, and it is apparent that the existing machinery of information must possess some hidden flaws.

The spread of these discussion and information groups on a geographical basis during the last fifteen years is a remarkable achievement that could be criticized only on minor points. Obviously, the weakness of the movement does not lie in any lack of extensive coverage of the major communities. Want of depth, however, a failure to find roots in the community served may prove a missing factor in the whole system.

These interest groups have been described before as fragmentary, split off in some ill-defined manner from the everyday workings of society. In this, perhaps, may

lie their weakness as the main channels of communication relating the bulk of the American people to the world outside. It is not merely through lack of numbers that these small interest groups fail to provide a leaven of understanding to their communities. By the very nature of their organization they have detached themselves from community roots, assuming the almost heroic role of world observers. They meet to discuss world events as if these happenings were subject to analysis and control by reasonable members of a unified civilization. This approach, though proper and even essential to academic study, divorces the small group from the hurly-burly of practical life in an ordinary American community. Their devotion to world affairs remains separate from their life as citizens of a special place at a particular moment of time; in consequence, the majority of their fellow citizens are apt to regard their wider outlook as a private hobby irrelevant to the everyday matters on which public judgment must be passed.

This viewpoint tends to be unfair to the meritorious work of the special interest groups. Criticism, however, is directed solely at their efficacy as channels of communication to the popular mind. The discipline and organization they have adopted is well suited to the purpose of training a cadre of informed opinion, able and ready to provide leadership throughout the country when proper demands are made upon them. The block occurs because the ordinary community fails to make use of this potential guidance, faltering in the application of the wider

viewpoint to local problems that engross its daily attention. A breakdown in communication prevents the detached interest group from impressing its locality with the urgent, practical meaning of the issues on which it has special knowledge.

The fragmentary, interest group is perhaps the embryo of a new and improved type of citizenship, born of reason and humane morality. Its rapid growth throughout the country provides a healthy stimulant against the inertia of sectional prejudice and narrow indifference. Its true influence, however, must belong to the future, for the enlightenment that raises the group above community level also serves to separate it from the common tongue that must serve to form public opinion here and now.

World affairs, as has been stressed before, touch the life of the busy, hardheaded citizen almost wholly in terms of local consequences; in their effect on tariffs, trade, employment, security, and moral purpose. Recognition of the link between the everyday objectives of community life and distant world entanglements requires a high degree of social imagination, a quality not easily won without training. In this respect, the contribution of the special interest group fails to strike the main target. It seeks to encompass the world with impartial knowledge rather than to draw the world into the community through practical interests.

The nature of the organizations of these groups explains their detachment from community life. They are for the most part branches or affiliates of national

or regional organizations. The parent body, whether it be Council on Foreign Relations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Southern Council on International Relations, Pan-American Institute, or any one of the great information gathering or policy advocating bodies, supplies the inspiration and indicates the path of group activities. In consequence the local group assumes something of the lofty character of its patron; standards of judgment are strained through a fine sieve of impartiality verging on the supranational and even approach the academic in the best sense of the word.

Instead of the local group exploring the particular concerns of its neighborhood to discover the nature of their dependence on the outside world, an international outlook is sought as a thing in itself. The parent national organization is not employed to correlate and inform on a constant stream of practical questions concerning effects of general policies on immediate community affairs. Lacking this stimulus from the grass roots of public opinion the central bodies are confined to pouring out information of a general nature that requires considerable effort and skill to apply to the particular problems of specific communities.

When the special interest group is an offshoot of some definite policy advocating body, such as one of the various associations for the furtherance of world government, the split between the group and its community is likely to be even more marked. Here the element of missionary zeal leads the interest group

to preach to the community, calling upon it to place higher interests above its ordinary objects and purpose. The message may be sound and necessary, delivered by clear thinking men and women, but still it has the appearance of coming from outside. While the community may be capable of great effort if it feels that its own essential needs are understood and involved, any attempt to influence it to subordinate its nature to an alien form, however lofty, must arouse initial distrust and suspicion.

These fragmentary special interest groups though they have flung a powerful network throughout the country lack the one essential of integration with the communities in which they are rooted. To some extent they are composed of people striving to reach a higher level of citizenship and social understanding than their communities can offer in their normal routine. The potential leadership being developed in this way must not be underestimated; the achievement up to date is very great while the effect on the future of this infiltration of interested and informed opinion is unforseeable.

In a working democracy, however, leadership can only become effective when a bond of common ideas and purposes has been forged between citizen and leader. This channel of communication has not yet been opened by the special interest groups and must be sought in other forms of social organization.

## II.

The idea of a foreign policy based on true popular understanding of world affairs, must still be accounted an ideal rather than an achievement of American democracy. Historically, the popular will has made itself felt at times of crisis but in the long periods between wars the mandate given by the sovereign people to its rulers has been general and loose enough to allow considerable play for the promotion of special policies by determined minorities.

There is nothing particularly sinister in direction of foreign policy by minority groups. A continuous, logical policy in world relations is a national necessity; if popular indifference creates dangerous gaps in American statesmanship the burden must fall on groups driven by their special interests and knowledge to assume responsibility. Such groups, whether professional diplomats, businessmen with world-wide interests, or bodies seized with a cause may and generally do act in the sincere belief that they are serving the country's interest. Their position as trustees of public opinion arises from the self-induced paralysis of their principal, the American public mind.

The practical need for leadership groups that must function without awaiting the slow awakening of popular understanding has led to interesting developments in key communities throughout the land. Small bodies composed mainly of business, social, religious, and intellectual leaders are drawn together by practical interest in foreign affairs to form discussion and study groups.

There are twenty-one of these Committees on Foreign Relations established in communities over widely separated areas. Though each is an autonomous body they are all serviced by the powerful Council on Foreign Relations; in return the local centers analyze and report back to the Council popular reactions in their regions to trends in foreign policy. By means of its influential Quarterly "Foreign Affairs" and other publications on a similar standard of specialized knowledge, the Council is able to create a high level of informed opinion among leadership groups in key communities.

The Council itself has a selected membership of four hundred New York residents and two hundred and fifty nonresidents. In this membership may be found representatives of almost all the important power groups in American society whose interests touch in any way on the conduct of foreign affairs. The functioning of a leadership group of this kind reaching down into many of the principal cities of the country is strange to the normal pattern of democratic machinery. It has, however, nothing in it of the character of a conspiracy of the powerful. No attempt is



made to formulate specific policies or to use the whole organization to exert pressure on government or public opinion. Divergencies of viewpoint within the Council and its associate Committees are encouraged, as the chief aim is to provide the background of critical discussions needed for the birth of policies rather than to promote fully framed doctrines.

The common tie between all members of Council and Committees is their sense of responsibility. Each member is in his way a person of weight and consequence in his economic or social surroundings. Discussion with their equals stimulates and clarifies their ideas on the meaning of world affairs but they are always aware that their personal opinions once formed will be echoed and re-echoed through means of all the ramifications of social and economic power gathered in their hands.

This atmosphere of responsible power inevitably cuts off the leader group from the popular forum. They cannot afford to seek information from and mingle arguments with the irresponsible when their own conclusions weigh so heavily in social results. In a smaller, more compact country such as England the Pall Mall clubs play a corresponding role. In these well-guarded surroundings men of power in politics, finance, education, and religion mingle in safe familiarity weighing opinions in free discussion, opinions that deeply influence the processes of social control for which they are responsible in their individual capacities.

In England as in America the "club" point of view

dominates actual policy only where and for so long as public opinion itself remains dormant. It is the necessary means of filling a vacuum created by indifference and ignorance. Responsible men must provide some answer to the pressing needs of a continuous policy; where their clients, the people, will not stir they generally find some means to create an informed Senate of their own.

In the United States, however, an aristocracy, even one of interest, information and responsibility, rests uneasily on the general social pattern. Sooner or later the Leviathan of popular opinion will stir, asserting its dominance over foreign policies as over everything else. If the popular will has not been trained in understanding and operates on chance emotional instincts the whole structure of world policies planned by reasonable and responsible men may crash to the ground overnight. The rejection through partisan passions of the League of Nations after the first World War stands as a somber example of the dangers of tolerating great areas of popular indifference.

Leadership groups cannot act as a true channel of popular communication, however lofty may be their ideals or responsible their aims. In a democracy as assertive as that of the United States the public demand the right to formulate their own opinions from firsthand facts, even at the risk of being wrong. Responsible power groups with access to special information while a valuable and even essential accessory to the workings of democratic machinery can never act as the true motivating or guiding power.

The cynical view that economic or social pressure groups formulate policies by undercover transactions and then sell them to the indifferent masses by ingenious propaganda is born of an emotional distrust or even dislike of democracy itself. As Harold Lasswell points out "propaganda as a mere tool is no more moral or immoral than a pump handle." <sup>3</sup> Its use in modern society is that of one of many factors involved in the formation of the general will. In a healthy society it operates within severe limits as a process supplementary and even subordinate to other means of group control. "In this sense," writes Lasswell, "propaganda is the transmission of attitudes that are recognized as *controversial* within a given community. Education is a process of transmitting skills and *accepted* attitudes." <sup>4</sup>

American democracy is still vigorous enough to distinguish between controversial and accepted points of view. Its fairly passive submission to an educational process is certainly not extended in the German or Russian fashion to the infantile swallowing of any sugar-coated opinion handed down from the seats of the mighty.

Leadership in the United States may and should contribute a responsible, informed point of view but it does not and cannot control the final judgment of popular opinion. It has, then, a task unknown to other forms of government of creating channels of

<sup>3</sup> "Propaganda" by Harold D. Lasswell, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* Vol. XII.

<sup>4</sup> *The Study and Practice of Propaganda*, Harold D. Lasswell.

communication to its sovereign constituency, helping in the process of free discussion and accepting as a binding mandate the considered results of popular judgment.

Assistant Secretary of State, William Benton, summarized in a phrase the position of the American official. "Our processes in foreign relations must be exposed to the insight of the common man. His conscience and intelligence must be drawn into the State Department."<sup>5</sup>

Because the citizen is primarily a member of a community which provides him with firsthand experience of social life, popular judgment must be rooted in community affairs. The channels of communication then must lead upwards from local interests, feelings, and opinions to the great compromises of national and international policies. Messages flashed from above to the undifferentiated masses in the name of a synthetic nation or imagined world will always carry with them the stamp of unreality. They are what the leaders think, but as often as not they are *ultra vires* of the limited authority granted them by popular sanction.

<sup>5</sup> *Foreign Affairs, Background Summary*. Revised edition No. 2, January, 1943. Office of Public Affairs, Department of State.

### III.

Ground waves of popular sentiment sometimes stimulate understanding of world affairs in ways often barred to responsible leadership. The organization of sentiment, therefore, is an important path to the establishment of effective channels of communication. Policy advocating or action bodies working on a national basis are the principal factors in this field. They have the advantage of setting forth concrete programs with a strong emotional and moral background. Their call is to action and they afford supporters the satisfaction of practical social and political activities aimed towards a definite end.

The most interesting group in this field at the present moment are the advocates of world government. The United World Federalists was born in February, 1947 from a merger of six organizations that up to that time had pursued independent courses aimed at the acceptance of more effective world government. This new and vigorous movement has now launched a crusade to enlighten the American people on the necessity of subordinating national sovereignty at least in part to higher ends.

The techniques of the United World Federalists appear soundly based on community and regional organization. At present they are working through regional Institutes designed to prepare the way for more intensive community activities. At St. Louis, Missouri in April, 1947 a conference representing fourteen Midwestern states was held to plan a campaign in this region.

The practice of circulating community petition in favor of strengthening world government is growing. The case of Norwalk, Connecticut illustrates that this method contains explosive possibilities capable of erupting hidden layers of prejudice as well as stimulating the community to exercise its judgment on world relations.<sup>6</sup> Stirring communities towards action along these partisan lines is likely and probably intended to provoke a resurgence of Town Meetings for the discussion of the proper relation of the community to the world beyond the national borders. This in itself is an excellent educational objective and a considerable amount of propaganda fire is justified to bring the kettle of local interest to boiling point.

As an instrument of popular education in social matters Town Meetings balance great virtues against substantial limitations. They are primarily a call to action, a folk gathering where free discussion fulfills itself in public resolution. This is in the oldest tradition of direct democracy, stretching unbroken from the ruling assemblies of free citizens in Hellenic city

<sup>6</sup> Reported in *Saturday Review of Literature* May 31, 1947 in an editorial "Guts and Conscience."

states through the burgher meetings of medieval towns to the new world custom of the Town Meeting.

The limitations inherent in the nature of the Town Meeting is that the citizenry should have it in their power to act on the matters brought forward for discussion. There must be a common bond and a common purpose present which will make any final resolution effective in terms of social action. The need for a culminating resolution both sharpens the practical interest in discussion and holds it within the bounds of local capacities.

When applied to world affairs the Town Meeting plan faces the obstacle that it must operate in terms of some concrete issue to be settled by a local gathering. The future of mankind must be reduced to the sharp essentials that would permit it to be decided by the same pawky shrewdness that settles the question of a village water supply. This emphasis on the single issue stimulates emotional interest and suits admirably the aims of policy advocating groups. The questions of advancing world government, strengthening the United Nations, creating a world security force to replace national armaments, abolishing the use of the veto are all capable of this manner of approach.

Once the point of resolution has been reached, however, the magnitude of the undertaking as compared with the means at the disposal of the single community tends to promote frustration rather than continuous effort. An issue or a specific plan may rouse the

interest of a community; some small body of enthusiasts may stir up attention to its importance and events through the local press, radio and clubs. The climax may take the form of one or more Town Meetings at which an important majority of the citizens declare themselves for a certain solution. Thereafter, nothing seems to happen, the enthusiasts feel they have converted their fellows, while the ordinary citizen considers that he has participated as far as he can in a somewhat shadowy world of vast events.

The Town Meeting is after all predicated on local understanding and local control. When it wrestles with the wide world the sense of collective and individual responsibility tend to vanish in favor of expansive notions. As a means of furthering popular understanding along practical lines the Town Meeting on world affairs is more likely to stimulate than inform. Its great weakness as an educational instrument is that it creates the myth of the community as a fearless David facing the world Goliath armed with the irresistible sling and pebbles of local opinion. The intrusion of modern world politics into every aspect of the economic and social affairs of a locality is glossed over in order to point up some single dramatic conflict. In consequence the constant effort to link up daily neighborhood problems with the wider trend of events in the world outside is neglected. The ordinary citizen abdicates his right of control to the nation, the professional diplomat, the great leader, or the Cause. When called to face his place in the world,



he puts off the familiar working garments of his mind in order to assume a shining robe of irresponsible idealism.

Another variation of the Town Meeting approach arises from a community's own awareness of its setting in a precarious world. This spontaneous groping for information carries behind it more educational force than any agitation stirred up from without. An excellent example is the World Affairs Week held in four communities of Rhode Island under the auspices of the World Affairs Council of Rhode Island.

The tenth annual session took place in March, 1947. Fourteen public meetings were arranged in Providence, Pawtucket, Kingston, and Woonsocket. Subjects included *American Foreign Policy and World Unity*, *World Trade and World Unity*, *Your State Department—How It Ticks*, *The Palestine Problem and World Unity*, and many others. Six radio broadcasts served to stimulate public interest during the week. What is perhaps most indicative of true local support is that sixty organizations ranging in character from the Inter-Church Commission for Social Action to the Women's Advertising Club of Providence sponsored World Affairs Week.

The compact towns of Rhode Island with their continuing New England tradition and ready access to great seats of learning are perhaps more favorably placed than most American communities to foster a venture of this kind. It is probably too ambitious an educational plan to be transplanted indiscriminately to less highly organized regions of the country.

An attempt is being made, however, by the American Association for the United Nations to use this system on a national scale. The organization of a simultaneous United Nations Week throughout the country permits of great concentration of educational material. In the last analysis success will depend not on the efficiency of the central organization but on the state of preparation reached within the individual community itself. Awareness cannot be imposed from above but must be won through a reaching up from the grass roots for wider understanding.

Viewed as a whole the Town Meeting plan must be considered as a stimulant to communication, valuable and promising in itself, but no true equivalent to a settled channel for the constant flow of facts and opinions needed to make possible the crystallization of informed public judgment on world affairs.

## IV.

Perhaps the channel of public communication least organized up to the present may in time carry the main stream of opinion forming information. The great virtue of this channel is that it clings to the true nature of the social terrain, following the almost invisible undulations of local differences because it was dug and blasted by hands native to the communities themselves.

This channel is that of the natural groupings within communities, the local church, the library, the trade union local, the businessman's luncheon club, the Chamber of Commerce, women's organizations. These are the places where community business is attended to in practice; where men and women gain their social experience and express themselves in terms of collective responsibility. What is discussed and decided upon within such gatherings binds the citizen in his or her true, everyday character. The results of opinions so gained affect personal life clearly and immediately.

For want of a better word one might call this basic form of social organization by the name of primary

groups. They come together in this way because the pattern of life in a particular place under the conditions of the times made such a grouping natural and desirable. Their roots are deeply sunk in the tradition and peculiarities of the life of a particular community.

The public character of an ordinary citizen is to a large extent the resultant of experience within a number of these groups, the church, the Chamber of Commerce or trade union, the club. Psychological variations in individuals combined with the diversity of possible choices do, of course, permit of permutations and commutations to an infinite degree. Sameness is not possible but likeness does create the strongest bond of which human society is capable.

Popular judgment, then, must spring from opinions formed within these primary groups if it is to carry the true weight of social conviction. If world affairs are to filter into public consciousness they must first pass through the medium of the work-a-day grouping.

The major obstacle that prevents the natural group from widening its viewpoint to include the outside world is its sense of practical responsibility. Whether it be club, church, or business group, it is bound both by origin and purpose to deal with matters within its control on facts known to it by direct experience. The way in which events outside the nation react directly on local affairs cannot be clearly perceived through any of the normal means by which information reaches the groups. Because the facts are not clear the power to control seems vague and obscure and the whole

subject is shelved as too great for their organization to handle.

This sense of irresponsibility is in fact illusory, dangerous to the primary group itself, and fatal to the national community. It should be possible to breach the barrier erected between the locality and the world by conscious social organization. The primary groups are after all modeled to reflect wider outside influences on neighborhood society; the church mirrors a world view of morality; trade unions and business clubs apply principles worked out on at least a national scale.

What is needed to clear this primary channel of communication is the acceptance from one or more authoritative sources of a body of principles relating the main trends of world affairs to domestic matters. The application of such general principles to local difficulties and circumstances must be the work of the group themselves. Their conclusions poured into a common stream will form the true body of public opinion on foreign policy.

Whether the principles in question can come directly from the Department of State, be formulated by a responsible press or radio, or result from the combined studies and publications of specialized national organizations will be examined in a later place. The important point is that they should be acceptable as a clear and honest weighing of the situation by the myriads of primary groups composing the bulk of American communities. To achieve this end it may be necessary that they should be filtered through the

acknowledged national centers of the diverse groups, trade union headquarters, church federations, national associations on economic and social matters.

To complete the picture the local groups must in turn have the means of reflecting their practical applications of general principles back to the bodies entrusted with viewing national policy as a whole. Without this healthy interaction a separation between theoretical plans and everyday practices would appear to a degree intolerable in an informed democracy.

Organization of a kind and on a scale well beyond anything at present in existence would be required to achieve this end. There is nothing, however, inherently novel to the growth of our present society in the undertaking. Christianity is after all an ambitious conception of world unity on the moral level which is maintained as well as spread by skillful organization of this nature. When the need for deeper political, economic and social unity becomes pressingly apparent, there are sufficient grounds for believing that the required social organization can be achieved through use of latent techniques.

At the present moment of historical growth in the United States the question of the need for concentration on world affairs is still in debate in the popular mind. When conviction has been reached on this point methods of facing the need along practical, efficient lines will occupy general attention. The preliminary state of preparing popular opinion for a wider focus of interest may not yet be fully accomplished; the shock to traditional security and inertia

born of Pearl Harbor is still building towards its climax.

During this transition period the auxiliary aids of special interest groups, leadership cadres, and crusading movements must hold the center of the stage. They are the awakeners beating with their enthusiasm and purpose against the myopic indifference of settled habits of thought. When, however, the inevitable demands of an aroused and anxious people begin to make themselves felt then the opening of the main channel of communication through primary groups must become the principal task.

Substantial steps have been taken already by many of the major organizations to link their educational campaigns with the true units of popular judgment. This movement towards the grass roots of community feelings is blazing the path which the ordinary man and woman must follow to assume responsibility for their place in the world. New techniques and even conceptions of popular education must be attained before the end is won. An examination of what is being done or attempted has importance as a forecast of the future, a future nicely balanced on the knife edge of a perilous time factor.

PART FOUR

THE RAW MATERIAL  
OF DISCUSSION

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## I.

The machinery of democracy is primarily an instrument for the promotion of free discussion. Even if the democratic idea is widened to embrace social and economic aspects as well as the limited political sphere of human activities, it must still operate in terms of the creation, through mutual exchange of views, of a sovereign public opinion. This may be accounted a serious limitation to the ability of the democratic community to achieve efficiency as a modern state. As a limitation, however, it appears unavoidable; democracy as a way of life should be viewed as the dominant factor subordinating efficiency and the very idea of the state to its own superior ends.

The measure of practical success in social and political democracy achieved by the American people can be credited in part to their free institutions permitting discussion but even more to the happy fact that on the whole the bulk of ordinary people have known what they were talking about. Free education, common experiences unhampered by artificial class distinctions, and above all, the marvelous growth in the ease of communication have made the American nation

probably the best informed community of its size in world history.

This fortunate condition applies perhaps only within the social and political fields. On economic questions it is at least doubtful if the majority of citizens have had the means and ability to grasp the true nature and implications of the rapidly shifting pattern of events they have been called upon to face. There are grounds in this case for accepting the cautious view that economic democracy is an end not yet fully achieved in America or for that matter elsewhere.

As regards relations to the outside world, those lofty questions involved in conducting foreign policy, it is even more certain that democracy remains in its infancy. The American people have not in fact advanced very far beyond the impotent caution of the knights and burgesses of Queen Elizabeth's Parliaments. When confronted by their crafty ruler with a chance to participate in foreign affairs, the sober, seventeenth century representatives sensed that demands for tax money lurked behind the generous sharing of responsibility. With humble zeal they protested that they were unworthy to pass on such high matters of State pertaining solely to the Queen's prerogative.

A sense of unworthiness through lack of knowledge of the plain, relevant facts was in these times eminently sensible. A delegation of power had to be made as long as the mechanics of civilization were insufficient to allow the free spread of information. Modern democracy can accept an enlarged respon-

sibility only to the extent that it has overcome the traditional block in communication from the statesman to the citizen. It is probably true to hold that achievements in mechanical science have made it now possible for the ordinary man or woman to know as much if not more about the outside world than was given to Elizabeth's craftiest counsellor, the wise Lord Burghley. Scientific possibility, however, is not the same thing as social reality. A murky and ill-defined borderland lies between what the people could know and what in fact their traditional social organization permits them to grasp.

The material facts of world affairs appear to most people to be of a different order to the concerns of home politics. The latter are essentially practical, readily derived from firsthand experience of persons and events; the former reach the individual mainly in terms of dramatic conflicts given intellectual and emotional form by the intermediary handling of countless experts. In their final state they are not a proper subject for free exchange of opinion, for discussion among equals. They have become ready-made tools for action to be accepted or rejected according to how easily they can be reconciled with emotional feelings or accepted beliefs.

This dearth of basic material on which the ordinary citizen can draw to mould independent views suitable to his circumstances robs the process of national debate of its living reality. Policies are launched full-fledged from above, gaining support either through oversimplified attractions or the indifference of the

public to possible alternatives. The facts that should link world events to the everyday problems of personal life are for the most part missing and in consequence valid discussion by groups centered round practical experience is difficult if not impossible.

The need for material that would give psychological reality to discussion of world events lies at the heart of the problem of popular control over foreign policy. The public reaction to the loan to the United Kingdom affords an example of the consequences of this lack. A scholarly sampling of public attitudes conducted in June and August of 1946 gives this account of popular understanding of economic aid to Britain:

“It is apparent from the reasons people give to explain their stand regarding the loan that a relatively small part of the population has any understanding of the actual purpose of the loan. Only about one-third of the small proportion who fully support it mention its economic advantage to this country or to the world in general through its effect on trade, and among the other groups—those expressing qualified or uncertain opinions, or outright disapproval—there is almost no mention of the relation between the loan and foreign trade. It will be seen later that even when people are asked directly, ‘Do you think we have anything to gain from making the loan?’ barely one in six acknowledges the possible benefits to Amer-

ican or world trade. In the main the loan is viewed in a quite different light.”<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious from these responses that the practical facts required for a true act of popular judgment were not available to the general body of citizens in the specific case of the British loan. The shrewd appraisal needed of effects on crop markets, job opportunities, and business stability for particular localities that might have been aroused by a domestic policy of like magnitude was seemingly paralyzed by the curse of foreignness. Faced with the problem of the extension of its economic life beyond national boundaries, the average community took refuge in emotional, and perhaps dangerously irrelevant, generalities.

By whom and in what way should the materials to bridge this perilous gap in popular thinking be supplied? An answer to this question must depend on the character of information that the public is assumed to lack. If it is a working knowledge of world politics similar to the stock in trade of a professional diplomat or journalist, the solution will be difficult to the point of impossibility. If, on the other hand, the needed facts do not extend far beyond the application of

<sup>1</sup> *Public Reaction to the Atomic Bomb and World Affairs, A Nation-wide Survey of Attitudes and Information* conducted by Survey Research Center, University of Michigan on behalf of Cornell University and aided by grants from Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Rockefeller Foundation. (Unpublished)

The sample for each of the two parts of the survey was a representative cross section of the adult population of the United States including all persons twenty-one years of age and older. Each sample consisted of approximately six hundred adults.

actual world events to local circumstances, material for discussion and judgment can flow through channels already proved in the formation of domestic policies. The difference between achieving a world view and forming a working opinion on how foreign policy touches on local affairs comes close to the distinction between idealism and practical politics.

## II.

The American citizen is in all likelihood the most fortunate political animal living in the modern world. This comparative superiority, however, does not content a minority of unknown size who feel a moral and intellectual urge to raise sympathies and responsibilities to an even higher level. This quest of the elusive Grail of world citizenship is an important factor influencing public opinion. Though the numbers engaged on it represent probably an insignificant proportion of the population, they are drawn for the most part from leaders in the fields of conscience and intellect. They are also exceptionally literate pouring their missionary zeal into all the channels of public opinion.

It is a courageous and worthy task to educate men and women beyond the narrow limits of nationalism. Though practical accomplishments must lie in the still distant future the crusade serves to expose to deserved criticism the more unreasoning prejudices of accepted jingoism. Confusion, however, does arise in the mind of the ordinary citizen when immediate problems of foreign policy are met in terms of exhortation to future world unity. Blueprints of Utopia



serve as poor substitutes for road maps to show the way out of a definite situation.

A clear distinction should be drawn between the moral education involved in preparation for world citizenship and the practical knowledge needed for community judgment on specific policies. Each of these objectives requires a high measure of organization, each has its proper field and methods, but their mixture leaves confusion worse confounded for the public who seek a clear source of information. Responsible channels of communication whether press, radio or semi-public organizations, have a duty to differentiate between the long range idealistic plan and the facts of the immediate situation. An analogy may be drawn with the editorial as contrasted with the news column. The public have the right to know what is put forward as speculation and what as relevant facts concerning current events.

Even the groups to which each of these separate messages are directed must differ widely in character and geographical spread. Preparation for world citizenship will by its nature appeal to the select few distinguished from the bulk of their fellows by intensity of moral purpose or a willingness to submit to unusual intellectual discipline. The form this education may take will be slanted towards the nature of its special audience.

The transmission of facts on specific situations, on the other hand, must cater to mass needs, not necessarily the hypothetical, undifferentiated masses but the real masses of primary groups that constitute the

living cells of our society. These bodies nourished on direct experience of men and affairs digest the concrete and practical more readily than other forms of material. They demand that a link should be forged between their known interests and the outside world before they bring such matters to the bar of their judgment.

While the gateway of local, regional, and national interest serves as the main approach to the primary group this entrance need not be narrowed to selfish interests in the cynical sense of the term. Localities and even nations possess moral values which their citizens are willing to uphold even at the cost of profit or security. The condition of access to the primary group is that the material presented should be within their frame of reference. It should permit practical, local problems to serve as the starting point of enquiry into wider affairs.

It would simplify matters considerably if the responsibility for supplying material for the practical discussion of foreign policies lay in the hands of one distinct group of organizations while other clearly separate bodies concentrated on educational plans for the future ideal of world citizenship. This unfortunately is very far from being the case. Even the daily press and radio mingle speculative idealism with analysis of practical policies in a spirit of hopeful abandon.

The great fact-finding organizations such as the Foreign Policy Association or the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace have to tread a difficult

knife-edge on this question. An unknown proportion of the special interests they seek to serve hunger for the lofty, idealistic approach, while the views of the majority of discussion groups in the country cannot easily be ascertained by existing procedures. In consequence the considerable funds and skills of the network of private and semi-public organizations are expended in a "buckshot" distribution of material. Expert appraisals intended for the specialist, proposals for ideal solutions to the world's troubles, and popular analyses of current situations pour out from these sources, leaving the use of this varied material open to the chance consumer.

To reach a working conclusion as to the nature of material that would permit widespread, practical discussion of foreign affairs, some arbitrary assumptions may have to be made. In the first place, the primary group, reaching opinion through discussion, does not covet expert status. It seeks to use the expert and expert information and for this purpose requires that data be made available in ways that can be grasped by ordinary, busy men and women. The business of the group is, after all, to make decisions on matters which affect their daily bread and butter. They must and will leave to the expert a wide field for his special talents so long as he is willing to use his skills honestly in their service, acknowledging their right to make the final judgment.

The preliminary sifting of the raw material for popular discussion then should be in the hands of ex-

perts. The citizen group, whether advertising club, church, or factory group, exercises arbitrary choice among competing types of experts. No apparent organization exists to aid this task. Individual judgment follows the same canny lines as determine whether advice on health should be accepted from a newspaper health column, a magazine article, the family doctor or a recommended specialist. A great deal depends on the extent to which any particular issue is felt to be intensely important to personal welfare.

In the second place, the nature of information supplied for discussion should be such as to permit practical application to local conditions. As Walter Lippmann has had occasion to point out: "General information for the informing of public opinion is altogether too general for intellectual decency. And life is too short for the pursuit of omniscience by the counting in a state of nervous excitement of all the leaves on all the trees." <sup>2</sup>

The paramount need is for the statement of problems that can be resolved in action through existing community machinery. General of the Army Eisenhower has pointed out a shrewd analogy between fire prevention and the avoidance of war: "Citizens, community and nation joined to help defeat the menace of fire. To win security against it in the crowded city, the individual early joined his fellows in the volun-

<sup>2</sup> *The Phantom Public* by Walter Lippmann, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1925, page 44.

teer fire department; he entered into associations for relief from loss or injury; he sought out better devices to prevent or to extinguish; he designed legislation to curb carelessness or selfishness that might endanger property and lives; he engaged in an untiring campaign, that still continues, to teach the cause and prevention of fires. . . . There is here the shadowy outline, at least, of a pattern of effort against war!"<sup>3</sup>

In the case of fire prevention, citizen groups felt competent to act for their own protection, to gear their local activities to the workings of the central machinery of government. Self-interest was apparent and clear facts could be made available for practical discussion and judgment. A democracy should be able to handle its foreign policies in a parallel fashion if expert skill is employed to reduce them to understandable terms of local needs. Integration on the national level will follow as it does in the case of home policies. American communities by now are well-grounded in the art of necessary compromise. The Union despite all the strains and shocks of expansion over half a continent has in fact endured.

The problem, then, remains one of translating the shadowy movements of world politics into the clear outline of farm, town, and city interests. It is a task the educational hierarchy of the country, whether in schools, universities, foundations, newspapers, radio, magazines, motion pictures, or government offices, is

<sup>3</sup>Quoted from an address by General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower before the National Board of Fire Underwriters, New York City, May 27, 1947. War Department Press Section Release.

bound to attempt. As in medieval times the "clerk" has an important social part to play; the growth of communications now makes any failure of responsibility fatal to the general health of society.

### III.

Any community anywhere in this country has certain of its vital interests linked with the course of world events. The connection may be direct and immediate as in regions dependent for their prosperity on world prices for wheat, cotton, tobacco or it may be indirect and seemingly remote as in problems of immigration, balance of trade or the final disruptive threat of war itself. In either case recognition by the community of a lack of power to control its own affairs if the world factor is left out of account is essential to understanding of specific problems.

The material required for community discussion then, is the skeletal outline of the way in which locality, nation, and world are drawn together in the handling of particular issues. Each community can supply from its own experience plenty of substance to flesh the bare bones of a generalized problem, once the connection with its own life is made clear.

There are certain basic issues which in one form or another apply to all communities. These may be considered the proper subject matter for analysis and distribution by educational agencies accepting na-

tional responsibility. By concentrating on material known to have direct meaning to community groups the educational forces of the country can fulfill their proper task in the building of informed public opinion.

A trinity of aims common to all may be named, security, trade, and moral purpose. Each of these reaches deep into individual life through the community and primary group while true fulfillment requires an ordering not merely of the nation but of the world. Problems brought within these terms then will arouse true discussions, permitting the democratic process to operate within the field of international relations.

Security, perhaps, is the most obvious interest arousing the protective urge that lies at the base of family life. It might be expected that the most successful campaigns to engage public attention on world affairs would be centered on the danger of war. The history of popular movements between wars bears this out. The shock of the first European war stirred the depths of American communities for a full decade. While a temporary revulsion reacted in political isolationism a wider, more lasting disquiet struggled for solace through idealistic projects for world peace.

William G. Carr of the National Education Association gives a vivid account of the ferment of this period: "The whole educational campaign, for it was nothing less, was driven forward by an army of committees, institutes, associations, leagues, and councils, all dedicated to the task of promoting peace by making the



American people peaceful. These groups poured forth a steady torrent of pamphlets, open letters, manifestoes, study plans and earnest resolutions. If the very multiplicity of agencies and publications was confusing and wasteful, it is nevertheless true that the sum total of their efforts was impressive.”<sup>4</sup>

The tragic anti-climax of Pearl Harbor did not spell the failure of this well-organized effort to impress the ordinary man and woman with the moral value of peace. In fact the educational movement may be said to have succeeded beyond the safety point of political caution. Millions of citizens had become convinced of the extreme desirability of peace without realizing that the cost of avoiding war would entail radical changes in their way of life.

The vigorous peace debate of the nineteen twenties and thirties collapsed mainly because all the relevant materials for a true discussion were not presented to the communities. Missionary zeal led to unintentional suppressions of facts and problems, fogging with unreal optimism one of the deepest concerns of the individual and group. The advocates of peace did not have sufficient trust in the tough-mindedness of the civic group to risk the full democratic process of discussion of unvarnished facts.

They did, however, manage to prove that there is unfailing interest in this subject; that communities of every kind throughout the nation will exert themselves by every means in their power to understand

<sup>4</sup> *Only by Understanding* by William G. Carr, Headline Series, Foreign Policy Association, page 10.

and act on the issue to the limit of their competence. Because of their pioneer work the struggle against war today can be continued on a more realistic basis. Communities have been aroused and organized for discussion; they are toughened now by experience to stomach hitherto unpalatable facts.

## IV.

The present campaign to bring the world into farm, village, and town through the tragic breach suffered anew in family safety has lost none of the fervor and drive of the earlier crusade. It has, however, gained considerably in diversity of appeal and in acknowledgment of public ability to judge the plain truths of any situation.

To some extent the atomic bomb is acting as a symbol of imminent destruction. The National Committee on Atomic Information directs a spirited program to bring the scientific facts and political possibilities of the use of atomic energy to public attention. This body describes itself as "a clearing house established by sixty national organizations to provide a medium through which they can cooperate with the atomic scientists and their colleagues for public understanding of the scientific facts of atomic energy and their implications for society."

Among the associated organizations are the Catholic Association for International Peace, the National Education Association, the Order of Railway Conductors of America, the National Farmers Union, the

National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Workers Education Bureau of America.

An audience so diverse in political and social attitudes requires an approach in terms of some basic human need. Physical security for the individual, family and community is the magnet attracting these bodies to a common program.

In many ways the development is new to American life. The presence of a direct and seemingly imminent physical threat has altered the attitude of the ordinary man and woman towards relations with the outside world. The element of leisurely political and moral choice, which might be safely delegated to the expert has dwindled in face of stark destruction. The scientist now has some unpleasant facts to reveal, a peril common to everyone that cannot be brushed aside by political maneuvers.

The methods by which education for atomic safety are being conducted follow a realistic pattern. The community is treated as the organizational cell, the first step being to call together whatever local representatives there are of the same national organizations as compose the parent body. With this group acting as a directing center a program can be envisaged based on the distribution of literature from national headquarters, the encouragement of discussion groups, and constant coverage by the local press and radio of the implications of atomic energy.

The shortcoming reported in the present stage of the campaign has lain generally in the inability of the

local community to plan the type of large events that would reach the whole community. The difficulty, however, may lie in the failure of words alone to stir latent group energies. The power to act is a motivating force for purposeful discussion. When a group senses that there is little or nothing it can do in its own field to alter conditions the release of a torrent of words ends generally in apathy.

The new security movement despite the concrete fear of atomic destruction is in some danger of following the pattern of the earlier peace movement. Materials presented for discussion by ordinary citizens lack some of the essentials needed to make the democratic process work. They are not sufficiently linked to affairs over which the local group exercises direct control.

The scientists' Day of Judgment may weigh heavily on the heart of Adam Goodman, merchant in a small California town. His anxiety may lead him to bring the matter before his branch of the Lions Club, organize a group in his church to stir public opinion, write challenging letters to the local paper. The literature he can obtain from the National Committee on Atomic Information will be factual, stimulating and in terms that he and his fellows can grasp with ease. Discussion, however, centering round judgments on matters of very high policy is oppressed by the sense of being a few unheeded voices among one hundred and thirty millions of equal weight.

While he is wrestling with the ultimate fate of mankind in general theory, Goodman, merchant and citizen, is working busily in his normal groups to make

the practical decisions that determine the course of community life. Prices, labor conditions, taxes, race toleration, immigration, control of natural resources, group discipline for moral ends, all crop up in one form or other in the work-a-day judgments of his associations. Because the shadow of the atom rarely seems to touch these practical questions, a split is brought about between group action and moral intent.

To allow Goodman and his kind to struggle in earnest for security it is essential that they should be able to link their feeling of danger directly with the local circumstances which lie within their own ability to control. At community level, security cannot be isolated by the dramatic symbol of nuclear fission, from its components of trade and moral purpose. No single organization slanted towards one aspect of the total problem can supply the Goodmans of this country with the raw material for policy making discussion. In some way or other the atom bomb must be equated with trade policies, humane Christianity, and cultural toleration before it can be the subject of action by primary groups.

The waging of separate campaigns to inform the public of world affairs from the point of view of artificially isolated problems, war, colonial imperialism, tariffs, etc. is in itself a major cause of confusion. As the people are not an amorphous mass but are already organized in an intricate network of interlocking, responsible groups, the audience demands the presentation of a total problem corresponding to the actual-

ities which they seek to master in their local environment.

This in the last resort must be brought about by organization within the bodies charged with the duty of supplying information for discussion on the community level. Content of material should do more than meet the requirements of simplicity, factual authority and timeliness. It must lose the curse of one-sidedness, presenting a complete picture of the situation that will challenge the community to local action in terms of their own particular circumstances.

In order to achieve this end, there may have to be a radical change in the almost competitive attitudes of the semi-public and governmental organizations at present in the field. The target group of each organization should be clearly defined; those aiming at community level will be forced to consider that raw material for purposeful discussion can only be forthcoming through joint rather than separate efforts. Policy advocating or action groups would, of course, retain their independence, but under a clear label with perhaps the joint informational bodies aiding communities to disentangle their conflicting messages.

Before any ideal plan for presenting raw materials of discussion on world affairs on a community level can be formulated it will be necessary to examine the methods at present in use of compiling and distributing material. Existing organizations are providing a vast amount of literature, backed by a high level of scholarship, and set out in many ingenious forms to attract the attention of ordinary citizens. That such

plentiful and carefully prepared ammunition is not inflicting deeper wounds on public apathy and ignorance is no reflection on the able scholars and administrators who forge the weapons. The target, itself, is clouded and until agreement is reached at where to shoot and who should fire the choice of ammunition must remain a wasteful gamble.





PART FIVE

SOURCES OF EXISTING  
MATERIALS AND METHODS  
OF DISTRIBUTION

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## I.

What the ordinary citizen needs to know in order to exercise free judgment on matters of foreign policy is a hard question to answer. Public and private distributors of information must perforce base their campaigns largely on guesswork. The types of material supplied for community discussion then may be classified in terms of the views of the major organizations on how best to reach the public mind.

The target group aimed at will provide the first means of classification. Information can be presented for the use of experts, scholars and men of affairs whose vocation requires specialized knowledge of world politics. Alternately, it may be slanted towards another expert group of less specialized habits, the varied tribe of publicists. Finally, direct approach can be made to the community group without passing through the hands of intermediary messengers.

In theory at least this chain of communication should always end in the enlightenment of the public. Original material processed by research scholarship seeps down to the publicist who translates it into the common tongue. In practice there are a great many

hitches indeed between the careful findings of research and public understanding. The time lag involved is in itself almost fatal to the working of this system as regards world affairs. By the time a problem has been digested by independent scholars and experts, the chance for action by community groups in all probability has passed.

Immediate communication of current problems to community groups is a need that should be satisfied by direct means; the cumulation of expert opinion can never by itself guarantee wide public information. Organizations, however, show an understandable reluctance to face the community group without benefit of intermediaries. The task appears too limitless for private funds.

Even where public monies are involved information is dispensed largely for the benefit of the expert. The Department of State as the main source of authoritative documents has a difficult problem to solve. On one hand Congressional parsimony imposes limits on the nature and quantity of its publications while on the other hand it lacks adequate means of direct distribution to community groups.

The choice made by the Department is to delegate to private agencies both the interpretation and physical spread of original documents. Regional bodies, generally joint councils of agencies concerned with world affairs, are selected as distribution agents for various areas. The Joint Council for International Cooperation, for example, distributes the Department's publications within the New England area.

This body distributed 19,324 documents issued by the Department over a three month period as a result of a publicity campaign undertaken at its own expense.

In general, however, the task of physical distribution and popularization can not be met effectively by private organizations. Reference material is accumulated and to a considerable extent made available to scholars and experts; there the process is likely to stop, not because the organizations fail to see the need of reaching community groups with firsthand material, but through lack of men and money to do the job.

Conclusions and facts that should serve as the basis for policy judgments too seldom escape from this layer cake formation. The rich material of policy is concentrated in too narrow an area leaving the public mind a spongy substance lacking nourishment.

As an example, the Department published in 1946 an excellent brochure on "United States Economic Policy Toward Germany."<sup>1</sup> This exposition of official policy, graphically illustrated, contains valuable material for practical understanding of future dealings with conquered Germany both as regards trade and human recovery. None the less it requires translation from the diplomatic phraseology used before it could become a useful tool in the hands of community groups seeking a path through local interests to world recovery. Theoretically, a document of this character should be transmuted into the language and terms of

<sup>1</sup> *United States Economic Policy Toward Germany*, The Department of State Publication 2630, European Series 15.

the thousands of varied groups throughout the country who rely on private organizations for basic material.

In practice no single organization can afford to treat the flood of State Department publications in this elaborate way. If the public are fortunate some expert publicist may give his views in a newspaper column or magazine article. More generally it is sterilized in a reserve of scholarship buried as far from the ordinary citizen as the gold at Fort Knox.

When, on the other hand, the Department of State seeks to by-pass the scholarly expert and speak directly to their constituents they run up against the barrier of practical politics. Neither President nor Congress, their dual masters, could tolerate activities by an administrative department designed to provoke free popular discussion on matters of settled policy. A certain latitude to explain official plans can be allowed but alternate decisions that might run counter to the prevailing political atmosphere may not be explored. Because its masters are partisan, the Department of State must itself accept partisan limitations. Though it may inform the public on the nature of official policy, it is not free to discuss the true basis of political judgments.

It is perhaps for this reason that popular versions of foreign affairs coming from the Department generally take the form of printed speeches, policy declarations by responsible officials. Though a flavor of the collected sermons of a more leisurely epoch clings to this method it allows the Department one direct approach

to the public ear. Some of these leaflets, carefully suited to public taste, present the facts of problems well within the capacity of local groups to discuss. Where political issues are not too immediate and apparent some trenchant speaking can come from official lips. "The American Trade Program. What Do We Have At Stake" <sup>2</sup> is a good example of straightforward writing with meaning for the ordinary citizen. It may be compared, however, with the Department of Agriculture's leaflet "Let's Talk About Buying and Selling Farm Products Abroad," a discussion guide for farm groups distributed through the grass roots system of Federal and State Agricultural Extension Services.

The ideal of an Extension Service with its myriad of associated local groups serviced by modern educational devices is well beyond the hopes of the State Department now or in the foreseeable future. Why this should be so remains a mystery of democratic politics. Farming now ranks as an interest, protected and serviced by public monies even against rival interests, but peace and destiny are counted matters of opinion to be wrestled out like religion within millions of independent, individual souls.

The availability of State Department material for use in public discussion must depend on the creation of an educational service rooted in community groups. At present the Department can only answer requests

<sup>2</sup> *The American Trade Program. What Do We Have At Stake?* by Claire Wilcox, Director of the Office of International Trade Policy, Department of State, 1947, Publication 2758, Commercial Policy Series 100.



for materials if and when they are made by community organizations. That one hundred and thirty such requests have been made shows a hopeful degree of liveliness in local groups. It is too much, however, to expect that every autonomous body facing the impact of world affairs on its private concerns can seek enlightenment directly from the Department of State. Organization on a large scale is essential and the moot question is who should undertake this task.

The most obvious candidates are private bodies and foundations supported by trust funds and subscriptions. They stand out perhaps more because they are alone in the field than from any intrinsic strength of their natures. If the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace be chosen as an outstanding example, the gap between the scope of the task and the resources provided becomes apparent. In 1910 Andrew Carnegie wrote a letter to the trustees of the endowment, characteristic both in its frank idealism and individual spelling:

“Gentlemen:

I hav transfered to you as Trustees of the Carnegie Peace Fund, Ten Million Dollars of Five Per Cent, First Mortgage Bonds, the revenue of which is to be administerd by you to hasten the abolition of international war, the foulest blot upon our civilization . . . . .

“Lines of future action cannot be wisely laid down. Many may hav to be tried, and having full confidence in my Trustees I leav to them the wid-

est discretion as to the measures and policy they shall from time to time adopt, only premising that the one end they shall keep unceasingly in view until it is attained, is the speedy abolition of international war between so-called civilized nations . . . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Faced with a mandate as general as it was courageous, the Trustees have had to select those lines of activity that would seem the most promising approach to the ideal end. Research in International Law, Economics and History have had to take their place beside popular education. For the year 1945 (the last for which a Year Book has been issued up to this time of writing) over half the current income was spent on the Division of Intercourse and Education. In terms of the needs to be faced even the total income of the Endowment would have appeared insignificant.

The idea that foundation money assisted by casual subscriptions can suffice to create an educational structure reaching the full body of the adult public is perhaps fantastic. Foundations, wisely administered, can act as rallying points, linking together a wide variety of independent activities carried out on community level. Their resources in cash and knowledge, however, will always fall short of the demands of a full program of direct operations in the field.

The place of the private organization, then, is to service, within the limits of its resources, community

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Carnegie's Letter to the Trustees, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Year Book, 1945, page 1.

and regional groups that have already won the battle of self-organization. Though these may represent only a minute fraction of the public in need of information, they constitute the practical boundaries of institutional aid.

The public is by nature self-creating; where primary groups weaving their pattern of social order have learned to formulate local interests in terms of the nation, public opinion appears as a living force. No outside agency can bring this about or in fact create anything but a sham appearance of popular feelings out of noisy iteration. The power to organize the voice of the people lies in the hands of the primary groups; the strength and scope of their questioning of the social order is the only true measure of the public mind.

The notion of the masses as a passive body into which feelings, ideas or opinions can be pumped through use of the correct sociological machinery is one of the illusions common to our mechanistic times. The organic view of society as a process of growth not manufacture has support from direct observation as well as from the rhetoric of Edmund Burke and the arguments of a formidable army of political philosophers. It is possible to watch and note the doings of myriad primary groups acting and reacting on each other to produce a developing social system; the imprinting of fully fashioned mental habits on millions of individuals by some central agency can only be imagined in the dark of the study.

Mass media certainly exist in the forms of press,

radio, motion pictures, but are there mass communications above the level of generalized human emotions? It is at least difficult to conceive of opinion or information welded into the type of unity that would satisfy all the multifarious needs to be found within the network of national diversity. It is even harder to imagine any central intelligence of sufficient breadth and detachment to guess at all the interests involved in every locality with the sureness that would allow the right message to go to the proper quarters at the most apposite moment. Despite the experience of nearly two hundred years of representative government even the Congress of the United States might flinch from such a responsibility.

The ambition to spread information directly to the masses must lead any central agency, whether public or private, to sterile efforts beyond its powers. A choice of practical targets in the form of self-organized groups is needed to give body and shape to the material submitted to the bar of popular judgment. Questions rising directly from the natural interests of active groups should mould the nature of the material supplied. In order to function as service bodies, private organizations require to attract these questions to themselves. Before they can create valid material for public use they must have linked themselves in organic relationship with a specific network of primary groups.

Types of material then are not dictated merely by the ingenuity and whims of central bodies. They are the resultants of organized relationships between ac-

tive citizen groups engaged in the immediate social battle and the research scholar and administrator. In this relationship the dominant partner is the citizen group, at least as regards the nature of the material to be supplied. It is the man in the street who asks the questions and unless the answers correspond to the question the barrier of the unwilling ear will be raised. The research organization, of course, may not have the right facts to provide answers, or the channels from constituent groups may be too faulty to receive the questions. In such cases, and they are unhappily frequent, the service organization permits true public discussion and judgment within its area to go by default. Like other responsible groups in our democracy, it wields the shameful veto of institutional incompetence over possible advances in social understanding.

## II.

An audience imagined as one single ear strains the capacity of any distributor of usable material for discussion of world affairs. It is almost as difficult to treat as a unit the whole complex of world politics shaping the foreign policy of this country. Diversity lies not only among the interest groups who must be aroused to judge and act in their own spheres but is engrained even more deeply within the subject matter itself. Relationships between the peoples of the world in the present and future depend on too many factors, historic, geographical, economic, and cultural, to be lumped into one easy lesson.

In practice, organizations preparing material for public use have long accustomed themselves to limiting the subjects covered. The habit of specialization has grown with the need to fit programs to the capacities of staffs and the interests of like-minded supporters. The East and West Association, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the Pan-American Institute provide successful examples of organizations servicing on a nation-wide scale the bulk of interest groups concerned with clear-cut territorial areas.

There are, however, many other forms of specialization besides the selection of geographical divisions. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is justly noted for the contributions to scholarship and professional information made by its Division of International Law. The American Society of International Law has recently announced its intention of entering the field of popular education. World organizations can boast a weighty array of specialized groups including the American Association for the United Nations, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the American Peace Society, the Catholic Association for International Peace, the World Federalists and several others. The economic viewpoint is not so fully emphasized, perhaps because the Marxian heresy is still repugnant to our society. It is not, however, neglected either by the State Department or private organizations. As part of their wider function the Brookings Institution and the National Planning Association contribute economic analyses of international scope.

Emphasis on specialized material acknowledges the fact that self-organized groups of specific types constitute the idea of the general public. To supply these groups with the kind of information they want is to entrust the eventual act of public judgment to democratic processes; to leave to discussion among individuals and the interaction of group upon group the birth of a final public opinion. It may be expected, then, that as long as the demand for democracy endures the trend towards the supply of information

from specialized sources will increase rather than diminish.

The easiest way to present a general, all-inclusive picture of world affairs as related to this country is through the propagation of opinion. Persuasion through information is an attractive slogan concealing a deep contradiction. Information is the tool that enables men and women to judge in terms of their own interests; information frees the mind from persuasion. The spread of opinion, on the other hand, is the rightful way to attract others to your point of view. Opinions are sometimes a short cut to understanding and always an incentive to joint action.

Bodies openly concerned with persuading the public to accept opinion play a useful and necessary role in contemporary society. They are the gadflies to action lacking which democracies might slumber into disaster. The type of material they distribute, however, should be classified apart from the information services. Its function is different, it seeks to stir people to action along preconceived lines, rather than to provoke them to judge for themselves.

The task of placing national agencies concerned with world affairs into categories of information services and policy-advocating bodies would be one of some delicacy. The Department of State, for example, is bound to press acceptance of the official policy of the President and Congress. The ruling concept of democracy, however, does allow it to do this in a way that permits some freedom of popular judgment. The



government of the United States remains an honest source of information to its citizens as contrasted with regimes such as that of U.S.S.R. Even in the case of the great private organizations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace or the American Association for the United Nations some basic assumptions in favor of peace or a special type of world order color the character of the information supplied.

The question in practice is one of degree and the measuring rod that might be adopted is the extent the material is designed to aid judgment rather than persuade to an accepted line of action. Among the activist bodies the World Federalists hold an open and honorable place. Starting from the assumption that a unified world government is an absolute necessity, this organization uses legitimate persuasion to gain acceptance of its central idea. It can hardly be said to submit its thesis to public judgment as it holds to the view that necessity has outrun choice. Once the need for action is granted, however, the World Federalists use democratic ways to achieve their end. Conferences, discussion groups, and local associations are stimulated to work out plans and determine policy on a national scale. Information and true education are generously dispensed within the limitations of the converted.

There would seem little to be gained by attempting to fit materials into rigid categories based on the concept of information contrasted with mere opinion. It is questionable whether policy-advocating bodies have the effective means to influence general opinion on a

large scale. Their true function probably is to act as the central agency of dispersed groups already converted to a dominant point of view. As such they dispense factual information relating to their beliefs. They plan a cohesive rather than missionary part in the organization of public judgment. Their object is perhaps similar to that of more detached agencies, but they work within the limits of a narrower, more devout audience.

Common sense would indicate that ready-made opinion stems from organs considerably more powerful than private foundations. The press, radio and magazines are the masters in this field. A recent sampling by the League of Women Voters of a cross section of the adult population of Montclair, New Jersey showed that 73 per cent of the persons interviewed mentioned newspapers as their chief source of opinion on world affairs. Radio was an important guide to 58 per cent.<sup>1</sup> A sectional poll of this nature is no proof of the preponderance of newspaper influence over radio throughout the country. It does serve, however, to show that those combined forces hold overwhelming power in this field. At a rough guess material supplied by private organizations reaches no more than ten per cent of the adult population.<sup>2</sup>

It is not the purpose of this study to account for the tides of opinion or their effect on immediate policies.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in the *New York Times* July 16, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> This guess is founded on the results of the "Nation-wide Survey of Public Reaction to the Atomic Bomb and World Affairs" previously quoted. The survey found that one person out of ten belonged to an organization in which problems of world affairs are discussed.

While opinion is the master in practical, everyday politics, it is by nature an evanescent thing whose enduring roots lie in social capacity and the standard of education. Public judgment, the sovereign power in a democracy, owes its strength or weakness to the means in the hands of the ordinary citizen to resist ready-made opinion in favor of private views compounded from personal interests seen against the background of accurate information.

The educational function, then, of agencies and organizations does not rival the power of popular media such as the press or radio. They are intended to supplement and at times perhaps to curb them by the cultivation of critical judgment. While education may determine the future, it must leave the present to the publicists and politicians. The time lag between learning and doing cannot be abolished by missionary zeal however ardent.

### III.

Material presented for public consumption may be classified in accordance with form as well as content. The two are, of course, closely linked, the audience intended and the nature of the message dictating to a considerable extent the form to be used. Reference documents, for example, are properly garbed in the sobriety of scholarship while the ordinary citizen requires brighter reading lures.

Documentary material, the product of research, is aimed principally at the expert. It is costly to produce, necessarily limited to narrow fields of study, and predicated upon a select audience with sufficient background of knowledge to interpret its findings. Without this hard core of factual scholarship, however, opinion would run riot into the realm of myth. The scholar, as critic, is an indispensable brake to the wild movements of popular fancy. Nazi Germany, by deliberately removing or perverting the brake of free scholarship, proved the unhappy depths which may be reached by mass illusions fostered on cunning lies.

Responsibility for providing documentary background is a heavy burden on private foundations.

Though government departments bear a considerable share through the use of public funds, there are strict limits to the reliance that can be placed on this source. The political servant of public opinion may not be entrusted to monopolize a key instrument of popular criticism. Perhaps the academic resources of the country should be bound together in some form of free guild along medieval lines. As Cardinal Newman pointed out, this is the original meaning of the term university. Such an ideal solution, however, is very far from acceptance by the busy and competitive seats of learning scattered throughout the nation. In the meantime, private foundations struggle to master a mountain of relevant data, making available such portion of research findings as their limited resources permit.

A hopeful development was initiated in March, 1947 when an exploratory conference of leading research organizations was held to discuss the distribution of documentary material. Convened by the World Peace Foundation of Massachusetts, this meeting brought together such powerful figures in the field as the Rockefeller Foundation, the American Society for International Law, Council on Foreign Relations, Columbia University Press, Teachers of International Law and Related Subjects, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Cleveland Council on World Affairs, and other important private agencies. The Department of State, several notable libraries, and the publication office of the United Nations were also represented.

A cooperative effort by private and public organizations might bring about the selection of some central place where all documents published by educational agencies will be indexed. This would be of considerable advantage to libraries and experts throughout the country. It would permit them to keep abreast of the current material in their field without having to engage in burdensome search for primary sources.

The next step of a central agency for distribution purposes, pooling the mailing lists of all organizations, would require a surrender of institutional autonomy difficult to achieve under existing circumstances. None the less resources to serve the expert would gain force and efficiency under any plan of this character. Knowledge of where to find the most inclusive primary material on any international topic should raise the standard of expert findings to a notable degree. More reliable expert opinion would in turn affect the accuracy of popular judgment.

As a final stage, educational organizations should agree to a division of labor that would divide the field of specialized topics on world affairs between them according to their capacities. An agreement of this nature would cut down duplication and parallel research programs.

The start towards cooperation made by the major research organizations on the Eastern seaboard requires to be backed up by like conferences in other regions of the country. Universities have a major responsibility for furthering this plan both as consumers

and producers of documentary research in world affairs. Another principal beneficiary would be the library system of the country. Consumer organization on a local basis is needed to give life to the efforts of national bodies to rationalize their service.

The problem of presenting primary documents then lies principally in discovering what is most urgently required by the expert and in enabling him to find it without laborious research. Organization for effective distribution takes precedence over all else but scholarship. The demand will probably always outrun the supply within the limited circle of consumers once the material has been brought to their attention.

Experts in world affairs are unfortunately not accounted kingpins in our commercial civilization. Trade and industry do not find it essential to foster them with the same care as is accorded the learned in the physical sciences. Support for the student of international politics must come from the less closely organized forces of good will. It is perhaps a peculiar duty of benevolent foundations to place sufficient primary material in the right hands to maintain healthy criticism of emotional and interested opinions on foreign policy.

## IV.

The ideal manner of presenting information directly to community groups has not yet been uncovered. Educational agencies have experimented in many directions with varying success. What has to be solved is how to know the questions that have importance on the community level and the methods of answering them in familiar terms.

Pamphleteering has been adopted as a favorite instrument of popular education by many organizations concerned with world affairs. It is at least the continuation of a noble tradition. Whether the form has improved or become more sharply pointed to the general taste since the salty colloquies of Erasmus remains an open question. Newspapers, magazines, radio, and film have blunted public curiosity in the printed word. Stimulating facts presented for a few coppers have now to compete with the idle fancies of the comic book.

A recent survey of reading habits in Rutland, Vermont carried out by the publishers of "The Home Library" in conjunction with Rutland Free Library sought to discover what type of reading material was



customarily used as a source of information in an average community.<sup>1</sup> A cross section of the community based on representative groups was questioned on their reading interests and sources of information. While world affairs was found the most popular subject among all groups, the preferred source of information was newspapers with magazines and books ranking well above pamphlets. The low average score of 7.8 per cent for pamphlets on all subjects may have been due to difficulties of obtaining them in a comparatively small and isolated town. On the other hand it might represent with fair accuracy the competitive standing of the pamphlet form as against more up-to-date media.

Perhaps the most attractive experiment in pamphleteering is carried out by the Public Affairs Committee, a nonprofit, educational body that seeks to summarize in popular form the results of research on economic and social problems. Eleven million copies of the one hundred and twenty-five pamphlets published up to 1947 have been distributed. The subjects covered range through most phases of American interest and world affairs is strongly represented.

Among recent issues "War and Human Nature" by Dr. S. M. Duvall is an excellent example of how research findings can be translated into graphic, popular terms. It is difficult to see how the pamphlet as a literary form can improve greatly on the level

<sup>1</sup> Final Tabulated Report and Analysis of New Home Library's Cross Section Survey of American Reading Habits. Analysis by David K. Easton, Senior Reference Assistant in the Columbia University Libraries. Doubleday and Co. brochure.

achieved. Recently investigated canons of readability may indicate changes but it is questionable whether they would revolutionize appeal.

It is content, now, perhaps more than form that will determine the fate of pamphleteering as an instrument of popular education. Newspapers and magazines hold public attention mainly because they handle immediate questions affecting men's emotions and pockets. With some notable exceptions they do so in terms of opinions not information, but they carry the stamp of mass feeling that may lead to action. The ordinary citizen needs to know what is likely to happen in matters that touch his place in the community.

The pamphlet giving honest, general information may fail to grip because it does not mesh at once with the social machinery in which the average man is a busy part. A newspaper story for or against immigration or tariff restrictions may arouse sharp conflict among primary groups. It is essentially a challenge to action. Pamphlets such as "What Shall We Do About Immigration" or "What Foreign Trade Means to You"<sup>2</sup> bear a neutral hue when contrasted with highly colored samples of everyday debate.

There must be active demand for information of a certain kind before it can be profitably spread. Pamphlets have to meet the needs of specific audiences before their use can rival skilful organs of opinion and entertainment. It is not their informational character that is the handicap but the wide generalizations of

<sup>2</sup> Public Affairs Pamphlets No. 115 and No. 99.

their approach. Popular reading habits can make an outstanding success of the Montgomery Ward catalogue, a factual enough document, but one based on a shrewd appraisal of the interests of millions.

The experience of major agencies aiming to provide popular versions of world affairs seems to indicate the wisdom of planning for a known, concrete audience. The Foreign Policy Association has striven with considerable success to reach a varied audience on many intellectual and economic levels. Its "Headline Series" of pamphlets, though sound popular exposition, do not appear to aim at a mass audience. With a circulation somewhere in the range of ten thousand copies they serve to give background material to amateur and professional students of world affairs throughout the country.

Under sensible limitations pamphlets such as the Foreign Policy Association's "Who Makes Our Foreign Policy" and the Institute of Pacific Relations "Trading With Asia" provide needed building blocks for popular knowledge. They are textbooks for the semi-initiate, making possible specialized libraries of up-to-date information in localities bereft of the weightier resources of scholarship.

Mass pamphleteering by many single agencies, however, would seem a wasteful use of brains and money. Knowledge of the particular informational demands of a known audience are essential to any success in this field. It is unlikely that an organization specializing in one aspect of world affairs would strike the jackpot of wide public interest on many tries.

Where a pamphlet for mass circulation is held practicable it should be entrusted to an experienced central agency such as the Public Affairs Committee. The necessary research could be contributed by the organization initiating the pamphlet while the question of timeliness and form could be left to the experts on the co-ordinating body. While this development might act as a brake on the flood of pamphlets it would be likely to strengthen their effectiveness and prestige with the general public. It might also save organization funds for more useful purposes.

## V.

**When material is supplied to fit the activities of definite groups, forms of presentation assume more practical character. Recognition of community processes of adult learning leads to the provision of ingenious aids to meet specific needs. Discussion within and between primary groups has been emphasized as the soil needed for the cultivation of popular judgment. Discussion kits, then, give self-organized groups the tools required for democratic education.**

The Foreign Policy Association, through its Club Service Bureau distributes discussion packets based on its "Headline" pamphlets. These compilations are designed to provide factual material for several discussion meetings of a small group. The one based on the United Nations is a balanced assortment of original texts issued by the State Department and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, explanatory documents by the Department of Agriculture and the Foreign Policy Association, an outline and pictorial chart for the leaders' use and sensible advice.

Groups throughout the country seriously concerned with any of the major topics covered by the five or

six discussion kits of the Foreign Policy Association would find in them almost all the factual material required for reaching informed judgment. The service, however, is limited necessarily to a few topics of a general nature which may not always coincide with the practical interests of active groups. It is slanted perhaps towards activities of women's clubs and leisured cultural bodies.

An interesting variation of the general discussion packet has been launched by the American Association for the United Nations. The People's Section of the Association issues a Question of the Month for discussion by small groups. The question for April, 1947 was "What steps do you advocate for the rehabilitation of Greece?" Concise, factual material is provided and the groups engaging in discussion are asked to send their conclusions and views to national headquarters. After analysis a summary of these reports are submitted to the American delegation to the United Nations. By combining timeliness with the promise of practical action, the "Question of the Month" should prove an effective means of promoting responsible discussion on community level.

The problem that remains to be solved in the use of discussion kits, however, is how to reconcile demand with supply. As long as a central body selects the subjects to be prepared for discussions they are bound to be generalized to a degree that may strain local interest. Primary groups, existing in terms of neighborhood concerns, can discuss with profit only such subjects as are slanted towards their own re-

sponsibilities. Machinery to allow local and regional groups to determine the programs for which they may obtain discussion aids is essential to the widespread use of such material.

The East and West Association meets this need with an ambitious offer to build programs on request from local groups. As a matter of expense this service would seem to limit itself to occasional large meetings in localities where there are substantial groups interested in Asiatic affairs. The uncounted small primary groups in every town and village could not afford to employ a national organization as direct counsellor.

The most practicable solution appears to have been reached in Cleveland, where the ubiquitous Council on World Affairs undertakes program planning for all kinds of discussion groups in its region. Standing on a neighborhood level with the publication resources of the major national agencies within reach, the Council is in the position both to ascertain and meet actual demand. It can suggest discussion kits tailor-made to the idiosyncrasies of the active groups that constitute the sounding board of local opinion.

The full employment of discussion aids, then, appears to rest with further development of the regional Council or co-ordinating body in world affairs. National organizations are limited, because they are national, to the supply of material on general topics. These must be broken down into terms of particular local interest before they will mesh with existing machinery of social discussion.

The great body of women's clubs operating on programs inspired from national headquarters might rank as an exception strong enough to challenge this rule. It would seem true that world affairs programs carried out by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the American Association of University Women rank as major stimulants to community discussion. Study kits and discussion aids backing these programs are prepared in line with known interests of the members. Yet the same weakness that touches other national organizations in the discussion field must be attributed to the centralized direction of women's clubs. While local units may be stimulated and even cajoled into discussing given factual material there can be no guarantee that the chosen topics will possess meaning in terms of active local interests. The grass roots demand to link the outer world directly to neighborhood problems is not easily satisfied by topics chosen on the basis of national significance. By reaching down from above to determine the nature of local discussion, national headquarters are liable to separate local chapters from their natural community environment holding them to barren heights of organized womanhood.

There is one field, however, where local groups can obtain aid of the most practical kind from headquarters publications. Handbooks on how to organize and conduct discussion meetings on world affairs are working tools needed by the local leader. This is a pooling



of experience on a national scale, liberating small communities from the inertia of isolation, providing eager minds with organizational patterns worked out with professional skill. The Handbook distributed by the American Association of University Women is a model of clear advice summarizing how things can be done to bring about discussion in terms of facts and true interests.<sup>1</sup> This brochure deals with means rather than general ends; it recognizes the inviolable right of the community to think and judge for itself in its own terms. "Influence is local. It is constantly at work in the community, and international affairs are shaped by ways of thinking and public opinion there. All right, how go about working on that close-home opinion?"

With the best will in the world to service the public in general, private organizations are bound by the closest ties to their own members. The act of joining a particular club or organization is similar to subscribing to a newspaper or magazine; it is a declaration of interest in what it has to say. Information, then, designed specifically for members can be presented informally and economically, relying on the attention and knowledge of the reader.

Weekly or monthly bulletins summarizing world developments important in the eyes of specialized groups are a favorite tie between organization headquarters and their members. These dispatches shade in tone from the stately dignity of the Bulletins of the

<sup>1</sup> *We Earn the Future* A Handbook for International Chairmen and Others by Gladys M. Graham, American Association of University Women,

Department of State to the partisan newsletters of policy advocating bodies. At the head of the objective essays on current policy might be placed "Foreign Affairs," the famous quarterly of the Council on Foreign Relations.

The object of these communications, whether they originate from world affair groups or national clubs, is not strictly educational. They strike directly at opinion making in rivalry with the mammoths of press and radio. From one point of view they are the material of criticism, safeguards against the omissions and distortions of commercial news services. As such they have an important activist part to play in the making of immediate policies. Their use, however, is predicated on previous knowledge and continuing attention; to the casual reader they are either organs of opinion or lack concrete meaning. While the private bulletin links an association of members together it cannot escape the category of special news, the views of a group intended for the ears of its own. It is not an instrument of popular education.



PART SIX

THE NATURE  
OF ORGANIZATIONS

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## I.

The development of organizations in the field of world affairs mirrors the interests of all kinds of people in these matters. Interests being as diverse as society itself there can be no typical pattern of organization. The one requisite is that a true interest, corresponding to a social need in the community, should be clearly represented.

Organizations, then, each possess a character born of their special purpose and the groups naturally attracted to their aims. A tendency to overintellectualize organizational purposes is apt to give an unreal appearance of generality to individual groups. It is human to cover particular attitudes in a finespun universal cloak but too great a degree of such self-deception can confuse and hinder practical objectives. The effectiveness of an organization depends on the clarity with which it represents one definite strand of the social web. A universal view requires the perspective of all the organizations operating within their special spheres.

As representatives of distinct attitudes, organizations are empowered to act as general agents of the

primary groups sharing these points of view. Their basic function, therefore, is to ferret out and establish satisfactory relations with their proper clients. The difficulty of the task calls for ingenuity by no means inferior to that employed by great corporations to run their affairs. Lacking the sledge hammer of billions and the simple yard stick of profit and loss, the cultural organization is lightly equipped for the construction of social patterns from the raw materials of isolated groups and interests. The building of a clientele, however, must be accomplished, a mere association of leaders floats in a vacuum drifting inexorably from the world of live interest and action into a stratosphere of impotent intellectualism.

The failure of Peace twice within one generation has started a tremor which has only begun to make itself felt in social attitudes. World affairs after the First German war were still a matter of opinion not to be compared with money-making or home building in terms of interest or importance. To the bulk of the community probably they still hold this ambiguous place, but more uneasily with an irritating suspicion that personal interests are in danger. A growing minority now recognizes that personal and cultural survival is at stake, that getting rich and keeping safe can no longer be set apart from world responsibility.

Cultural organizations have shown themselves sensitive to this major shift in public concern. In their origins most of the long established agencies were intended to spread opinion. They modeled themselves perhaps unconsciously on the publicity conceptions

of the day, their mission was to sell Peace, Responsibility, or at least Interest to the masses. While research and scholarship on the whole were kept on a high standard, communication with the public was a one-sided affair with those in the know doing all the talking. It is doubtful if public indifference during this period would have allowed organizations to adopt any other course.

On the credit side leaders were trained, research stimulated, and some of the casual irresponsibility of the public press corrected. From the point of view of the crisis of our times, however, the campaign was not based on a serious grasp of the social structure. It offered an interest in world happenings as a cultural hobby, a luxury of opinion, even as an escape from the narrowness of practical, local affairs. The idea that millions of individuals might be wrestling with foreign policies within their local groups under much the same prod to survive as drove them to money-making, had not yet appeared on the national horizon. Though still a distant vision, it has now become a possibility that has led organizations to a radical shift in methods.

The new objective of national organizations is no longer to persuade or cajole the public in general but to represent the attitude of definite groups. Their method of representation is in general by clarifying practical problems and local needs through wider information and exchange of opinion. They seek to give to isolated groups the feeling of solidarity with their own kind throughout the country, to make in-



articulate views articulate through honest information. This form of representation is not held in particularly high esteem by a culture bemused with force. However, it is the gentle democracy of the ballad maker who gave the people tongue in his songs. When Homer and Hesiod represented the Hellenes by listening to them, succeeding generations of Greeks built a culture round their words. Our educational pattern can have similar force in carving the future despite the present idolatry of politics and money.

Organizing the group and interests that have found themselves deeply concerned with world affairs is a task that shows some similarity to the organization of labor or business. It may seem farfetched to conceive of foreign affairs ever holding a place commensurate in the minds of ordinary citizens with their economic loyalties. Yet in the early nineteenth century it might have been difficult to imagine the likelihood of the growth of the present network of Chambers of Commerce, manufacturers' associations and labor unions. Across the water in Britain it is possible to see already a kindred people whose daily survival depends as much on their understanding and control of foreign relations as on their personal industry.

Even though only the first shadow of world dependency has fallen on the primary group immersed in local affairs, the organization they will require to express their new fears and interests calls for serious study. As in the case of twentieth century business and labor, special institutional forms are likely to arise to meet unprecedented needs. Neither politics

nor press can provide the solidarity necessary to relieve the gropings of isolated groups. The present national organizations servicing world affairs interests are conceivably the forerunners of bodies possessing great power and prestige in social life. With the deepening of the world crisis, a man's views on security will outweigh many other social opinions at present dominant. The organs for expressing and clarifying these views will then come to the forefront of the struggle for social power. When such a time appears it will be of the utmost value that these organs were founded on incorruptible information and on honest representation of natural diversities.

## II.

The efforts of organizations have shifted from their original attempt to guide the public viewed as an indiscriminate mass, to an endeavor to serve definite groups with deep-seated interests of their own. This is an acknowledgment of a fresh need of democracy, the representation of primary groups struggling to keep the power of social judgment within their own hands. In the field of foreign affairs, information and judgment come before opinion and political action. The creation of adequate machinery to give expression to the thinking of primary groups lies outside the scope of politics or press. It is this unexplored region of social understanding which the organizations have now marked out as their own.

The research groups, catering to the expert, are by nature membership bodies. It would be wasteful for them to seek direct ties with normal action groups operating as the units of community life. The level of information required to profit from the work of research bodies is beyond the means of everyday community groupings. None the less, centers of research outside universities have felt an increasing respon-

sibility to link their work with the perplexities of active social groups on the primary level.

By creating and supporting intermediary bodies between local groups and national research associations, foundations have sought to bridge the gap between demand and supply in factual information. These linking bodies are open on one hand to consultation on practical programs by the primary groups, and on the other, to methods of dissemination of research findings. By their nature they must be local or regional with firsthand knowledge of the peculiarities of the primary group pattern within their district.

In New England, for example, a research organization, the World Peace Foundation subsidizes the Joint Council for International Co-operation, a body acting as a clearinghouse and information center for the numerous community groups concerned with international affairs. The Council is primarily a consultative agency to which forty-two member clubs come for program advice and information. It is an official channel for State Department publications as well as the documents issued by private agencies.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has built up over a number of years associated centers in the main regional divisions of the country. Central committees are now established for organizations in the following regions: Pacific Coast, Rocky Mountains, Middle West, Southwest, Great Lakes, and the Southern States. No attempt is made to formulate identical programs, each group develops the activities considered desirable to meet needs in its region. In

the words of the Endowment Report "although the program and methods of the various centers differ, there is agreement as to their fundamental purpose: to educate public opinion in regard to the underlying principles essential to security after the war and to welfare throughout the world." <sup>1</sup>

The center serving the Middle Western states may be taken as an example of this co-ordinating activity. "The Western Policy Committee at Des Moines, Iowa cooperates with the Carnegie Endowment in carrying on educational work with farm, labor, social, civic, business, educational, and religious organizations in eleven states west of the Mississippi River. The programs deal with (1) the broadest aspects of international relations and world organization, (2) domestic issues and postwar planning, and (3) inter-American affairs. The Committee assists in promoting the organization and training of leaders for public forums, study and discussion groups in Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming, for which it provides an extensive speakers' bureau, literature and program service, motion picture films, slides and displays. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

The Council on Foreign Relations, though primarily concerned with providing materials for the expert leader, has not neglected the grass roots of community life. In twenty major cities Committees on Foreign Relations are affiliated with the national organization. Through the cooperation of the Secre-

<sup>1</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Year Book for 1945 page 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. page 32

taries of the Committees, a study has been compiled on Community Education in Foreign Affairs to which reference has been made previously. This review of achievements and shortcomings in urban centers stresses particularly difficulties of providing adequate leadership.

The Secretary of the Los Angeles Committee provides a terse critique which could be applied to many other large cities. "The principal criticisms on education in international relations in Los Angeles may be summarized as follows: (1) too many organizations are working on the subject, and most of them not very intensively; (2) most of the organizations do not actually cooperate with one another, and as a result do not know each others' plans and programs; (3) all the organizations reach about the same people; men and women who want to devote serious study to foreign affairs lose much time in attending meetings where there is a good deal of repetitious effort; (4) the great mass of the thinking people is not reached."<sup>3</sup>

These methods of reaching down to the community level by expert bodies are naturally concerned with the proper use and handling of existing documentary material. The question of a gap between the problems of the active primary group and information gathered in terms of high diplomacy or abstract economics is not the proper business of research bodies. They are concerned to the point of seeing that their material comes to the hands of intermediary groups competent

<sup>3</sup> *Community Education in Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations page 64.

to interpret them within the actualities of the social patterns of their locality. Where this link fails due to the lethargy of community forces a national research organization lacks means to convert the social structure.

Among the organizations specializing in some particular aspect of world affairs, none has been so vigorous in the community field as the American Association for the United Nations. It has established regional and local offices throughout the country as channels for the distribution of literature and organizational planning. The object of the Association has been to explain the position of the United Nations directly to community bodies. To some extent its work has been evangelical and a single point of view has been necessarily implied. The excellent coverage achieved in the last two years cannot conceal one inherent weakness of this body as an educational force. As long as there is almost universal belief in the efficacy of the United Nations, this faith can be made the basis of general understanding of world problems. If, however, confidence wavers as it did in the case of the League of Nations, the Association will tend to become a partisan body limited to the faithful and tempted more and more into the field of open propaganda.

Another factor is obviously required besides the minority of those deeply concerned in world affairs if the many-sided complex of primary groups is to be reached in a satisfactory way. This missing factor may be described as the natural linkings primary groups

have won for themselves in their own particular sphere. The most obvious example on a national scale are Church Federations, general federations of women's and men's clubs, labor unions, national business organizations. To what extent are these basic groupings making use of specialized organizations in world affairs to make possible informed discussion among their constituents? Unless they are prepared to give encouragement and guidance, outside agencies will find the field of normal community discussion at least partly barred. While the majority of world affairs organizations make valiant efforts to maintain contact with these national representatives of primary groups the initiative does not lie in their hands. They can provide service of a high quality if called upon, but they cannot force their attention upon such powerful bodies.



### III.

Among the oldest and most revered primary groups in our civilization are the congregations that emerged from the catacombs of Rome to become the Churches of Christ. They still hold a place in the pattern of community life that may not be ignored. The authority of their moral values are indispensable to the understanding of world affairs by millions of citizens.

Organization for education in world affairs has been recognized as a duty by most branches of the Christian and Hebrew religions. An impressive list of national bodies are devoted in whole or part to this purpose. Distinguished examples are the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, founded by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America to consider Protestant strategy in relation to Peace; the Catholic Association for International Peace; the Church Peace Union founded by Andrew Carnegie; American Unitarian Association; Council for Social Action, Congregational Christian Churches; Friends General Conference; Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church; Synagogue Council of America.

The moral authority of these and similar bodies is

one of the powerful factors in everyday American life. It is a factor, however, operating on an insufficient informational base. Sectarian divisions splinter the information gathering and research centers of each church into incomplete fragments. Goodwill is hard put to compensate for lack of means to gather and distribute relevant facts. With the exception of some of the less sectarian groups, such as the Church Peace Union, little effort is made to employ the research material of impartial lay organizations in the guidance of church members.

From an educational point of view, ministers and their congregations throughout the country would seem to be inadequately supplied with the raw materials for discussion and judgment on world affairs. They are helped certainly by their national churches, but lack of any unified organization gives them only casual scraps from the plentiful material prepared and distributed by unrelated hands.

In Cleveland, Ohio, a clergyman's study committee summed up the church's problem in relation to world affairs, "Let us be realistic about the dilemma we face. On the whole the people of our country are divided into two groups. One, those with political awareness but a scepticism about the applicability of religious principles; and the other, those who spiritually and intellectually accept the religious principles, but fail for some reason to apply them to day by day happenings. Frequently, as a matter of hard fact, this failure is the direct consequence of the absence of adequate guidance by the ministers themselves. It is our task to

get these two together so that we will all apply those religious principles, which more and more are coming to be regarded as the only sound principles upon which international order can be established.”<sup>1</sup>

The recommendations made by the clergymen's committee were for certain practical steps towards a co-ordinated and cooperative program for Cleveland which could be used as a pattern for other communities throughout the nation. The basis suggested for this program was the devising of mechanical means through which the Council of World Affairs and similar local agencies could contribute to the expansion of church educational programs including the training of leaders and information on the availability of current material.

This recognition of moral responsibility, combined with a willingness to make full use of lay agencies, marks a high point in church organization. If the plan is copied by other communities, a very powerful force should be brought to bear on popular understanding of world affairs. Eventually the national churches will be called upon to face the problem clearly stated by the Cleveland committee.

Religious principles are relevant and perhaps all-important to an understanding of the world by important sections of the public. These principles cannot be applied in absence of a sufficient body of facts. The churches, singly, are failing to provide the material for true application of their principles because of or-

<sup>1</sup> "How Can Christian Principles Be Applied to the New Era of World Affairs?" Report I—Clergyman's Study Committee, The Council on World Affairs, Cleveland, Ohio.

ganizational weaknesses. The separatism of sects is one serious obstacle but a greater flaw lies in a failure to link with lay agencies engaged in the collection of material. If the church viewpoint on peace and security remains too vague to satisfy the practical demands of the faithful, it does not necessarily follow that religious morality is an impracticable guide to public affairs at home and abroad. A slackness in church organization divorcing principles from the living facts that should sustain them is as likely to be the answer. To the layman, at least, it would seem that churches have been too busy with other matters to have sought practical means to present their own truths fairly to an attentive audience.

## IV.

The labor movement, born and bred among primary groups, has shown the way to a new kind of popular understanding. Solidarity, the fighting weapon of the wage earner, is the result of patient explanation of how one job is linked to another binding the interests of workers in different localities into a single whole. The leaders of labor would be the first to admit that this educational task is still incomplete and will not be completed till machine and brain workers recognize not only the unity of their interests within one nation but throughout the whole world.

The freshness of labor's approach to practical education, the militant urgency it has given to the need of understanding, offsets some of the narrowness of its point of view. Organization, union training, and propaganda have been frequently confused with education in the upsurge of labor's growth. There remains, however, a pattern of fact gathering, democratic discussion, and group learning as a basis of unity among labor groups.

It is probable that the stage is being reached when the proud use of the term "international" by labor

unions will bear more specific meaning. The concentration of economic, political, and social power now in the hands of unions gives them a powerful voice in the determination of foreign policy. In terms of labor organization, this means intensive effort to uncover from primary groups the labor point of view and to express and clarify it through information and discussion. The responsibility of union leaders now reaches the world; depressions or economic earthquakes triggered by world forces can no longer be laid to the doors of the untouchable rich. Labor has to relate jobs and pay to world happenings in order to give its constituents the sense of controlling their own destinies.

The educational program conceived by national labor bodies for their members do not as yet show much emphasis on world affairs. During the war period the Congress of Industrial Organizations started a campaign for better understanding with the trade union movements in Allied nations. This does not appear to have made the transition to peace in any very active form. World affairs still seem to be listed as cultural activities, along with music and public speaking, in the working program of labor education.

The model educational setup of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union gives, of course, plentiful opportunities for its members to discuss world affairs from the labor angle. Other unions who have copied in whole or part the effective extension service pattern worked out by the I.L.G.W.U. are building up labor groups specializing in these prob-

lems. Through the person of Mark Starr, educational director of the I.L.G.W.U., organized labor is represented among the advisers to the United States' UNESCO<sup>1</sup> delegation. The labor movement has accepted, at least in principle, its responsibility for developing a world outlook among its members.

In practice, labor has yet to work out methods to reach its own community groups on world problems. The labor approach cannot be satisfied with ready-made policies dictated from on high. Information must be collected from reliable sources and linked to the human interests of working groups. This will require in the first place making full use of the work of nonpartisan research bodies and in the second place a system of interpretation to particular industries and localities by the unions themselves. Responsibility on labor's part calls for organization to implement it on a scale not yet achieved by the leaders.

Though ranked officially as unorganized labor, the housewives of America are not bereft of the privilege of speaking in unison. The women's club movement, headed by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and like bodies is a powerful force in the land. The main source of its power lies in its grass roots character, its reflection of the doings enjoyed by women in almost all localities and circumstances.

Responsibility for thinking and acting in terms of the outside world seems to have been accepted more

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

naturally by women's organizations than by either the church or labor. This may be an echo of the home-builders' overwhelming interest in peace or due at least in part to lack of direct responsibility for promotion of any single domestic issue. In any case the quantitative attention given to world affairs in women's clubs is probably greater than that in any other movement of like size.

The social influence and even political power that might be expected to flow from this constant, nationwide debate is greater than the actual results. Press, politicians, and action groups are able to discount with apparent ease the pressure of organized women's opinion as reflected through their principal agencies.

There are two probable explanations of this state of affairs. In the first place, the local club units may be too detached from the realities of community life, representing a leisure mentality that is tolerated rather than respected by working forces. This implies a general criticism of women's place in the American scene which would seem too harsh to be supported by the facts of observation. On definite local matters, such as support of the schools, the opinion of women's clubs receives true respect from the powers that be. The second explanation would seem more likely, that the views of women's groups lack force in the determination of foreign policy because they tend to crystallize on an unrealistic level. They are opinions formed on an insufficient basis of information, resolutions divorced from the local situations over which women possess effective influence.



The willingness of women's groups to further public understanding of world affairs is at present stifled by imperfect organization. The women suffer like the clergy and labor unions from internal divisions and jealousies that weaken their force in every community. Their national headquarters strive to supply thousands of local units with information and guidance collected in haphazard fashion. The resources of the research foundations are not being properly channeled for the use of local groups. In order to allow the women in any small town or village to make concrete use of their sensitivity to world affairs, their central headquarters should give them access to coordinated material that can only be obtained from nonpartisan research agencies.

The failure of women's national agencies to serve as channels of the best material available for democratic discussion is not merely a failure of organization. There appears to be a serious flaw in the purpose of many of these headquarters. They conceive their object in terms of expressing unified opinions by organized womanhood on countless subjects. The task of political and social lobbying is accepted before the certainty is gained that these opinions are the spontaneous expression of the feelings and knowledge of the bulk of their constituents. The temptation to leadership brings about the creation of official beliefs and attitudes fostered among the local groups with all the busy skill of the national organizer.

A certain lack of comprehension or even faith in the nature of the democratic process is undermining

the rightful power and place of women's groups in the understanding of world affairs. The need to express and act upon a unified opinion is being given preference to the means to form honest judgments from the facts at hand. Local groups are being led away from their responsibility to apply facts to the particular situations of their neighborhoods by appeals to become units in national campaigns to foster specific policies. This overhasty leadership weakens the democratic base of foreign policy; by cajoling instead of representing its constituent groups, a national body becomes a creature of opinion rather than a force of social education.

The women's club movement is potentially one of the strongest forces for the creation of a democratic foreign policy for America. It will remain potential, however, until the eagerness of grass root women's groups is matched by suitable organization. The achievement of such organization must include full use of material supplied by research agencies to allow the slow growth of independent judgments by the live cells of local membership. Opinion should be ripened below in neighborhood communities before the fruits of social power can be gathered on a national level.

## V.

The field of popular understanding of world affairs is crowded with organizations but it cannot be held to be covered or ruled in any orderly fashion. The separation of agencies makes the work of each incomplete; the basic unit of public opinion, the primary group, is wrenched away from its proper environment by one-sided appeals and partisan services. National agencies should themselves form a community, a close union of learning and responsibility, strong enough to mirror the natural communities they serve. Their failure to achieve this coherence of aims marks the degree of confusion that faces the American people on their assumption of world responsibility.

If peace and security are compared with labor interests or the advancement of public schooling, the difference in organizational strength is apparent. Both labor and schools possess from the grass roots to the top well-articulated organizations. Where divisions occur they reflect distinctive attitudes in their constituents that must be represented to keep democracy alive. In terms of social power, labor and the schools speak with authoritative voice in the nation's councils

by the right of fair representation of interest groups. Foreign policy cannot be related to a popular background in any like fashion. Where one or two clear voices would command respect, a babble of conflicting tongues serves to add to the general confusion.

The shadow, though it remains no more than a shadow, of popular representation in world affairs problems was cast at the birth of UNESCO. This branch of the United Nations bound itself by a declaration "that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed." Each member of the United Nations is in theory at least obligated to promote understanding of world problems among its own people as well as to contribute to common efforts towards that end.

The Department of State sought a democratic base for America's responsibility by creating a National Commission for UNESCO. This commission was composed of representatives of one hundred educational and social organizations dealing in one capacity or another with popular understanding of world affairs. Its object was to counsel the official delegation with advice drawn from a popular base. The Commission has held three meetings and is under the chairmanship of Milton S. Eisenhower.

From the point of view of the organization of an internal effort by America to further popular understanding of world affairs, the work of the National Commission has proved disappointing. The briefing of the American delegation was carried out mainly

through debate and acceptance of previously prepared reports. The State Department as sponsor controlled the order of business with an efficiently firm hand. Emphasis was directed, on the whole, more to the means of proclaiming American cultural ideals abroad than to the task of home organization.

Despite its initial slant towards becoming a technical aide to the State Department, the creation of the National Commission is an event of some importance. For the first time the major bodies in charge of cultural communication with primary groups have been called together to accept official responsibility for popular understanding of world affairs. If free debate was permitted on the domestic situation, if agencies were encouraged by the State Department to integrate their efforts in face of a common responsibility, a true policy for handling public information might be born.

President Milton S. Eisenhower apparently has this final aim in view: "I cannot say too emphatically that a people's peace can be determined only by the people. The understanding which a few government officials, diplomats, educators, scientists and artists may achieve will avail a democratic world nothing—nothing at all—unless that understanding is shared by all the people.

"I urge that each educator, service club president, minister, editor, begin considering at once what *his* institution can do to help develop the relevant understanding. I'm convinced that we must find new, imaginative, and effective methods in our program of

education—formal and informal—for the *one* world that *must* be.”<sup>1</sup>

The National Commission now exists as a parliament of agencies where the outline of a common policy for the furthering of understanding could be forged. While it is a satisfactorily representative body, it is not yet free from the official swaddling clothes of its birth. The hand of the State Department is too compelling to permit self-organization of business or free debate. To achieve independence, this powerful group must find means of financing its own meetings and settling its own program. The post of honorary adviser to the Government on the cultural side of international affairs could be filled even more effectively if this body showed the power to stand on its own legs.

Once freed from the dictates of State Department business, the main concern of the gathering of agencies might be to formulate a common plan for enlightening the American people. Pooling of informational resources and fields of effort would result in an increase of strength that might prove decisive in arousing popular interest in world affairs. More important than any economies or plans, however, would be the recognition of a sense of order in this field based on common purpose made concrete in the existence of a single representative body.

The National Commission may itself fail, but the pattern it has laid down for an ordering and correlation of agencies must in the long run be fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> “The Minds of Men,” Milton S. Eisenhower, *The Kiwanis Magazine*, April, 1947.

World affairs are now in fact as important to the community as major domestic issues. They must in consequence be represented in the national structure by organization of equal efficiency to those used in the handling of internal problems. The bricks of a world affairs organization are the existing agencies scattered over the social and educational landscapes. That they must be fitted together into a usefully coherent structure is no longer debatable. It is simply a question of how soon can it be done.

PART SEVEN

NEW TECHNIQUES

AND METHODS







## I.

The gist of this study has lain in the idea of the self-organized group as the basic unit of public opinion. It has been assumed that social learning is the natural path to adult development, that the isolated individual is something of an academic fiction. On these grounds it is worth considering whether present tools of communication are clearly fitted to group learning.

As the printed word can be scanned only by one pair of eyes at a time, reading is a private rather than social activity. Newspapers, magazines, books, and pamphlets are directed at an abstract individual; they seek to draw the reader from his living environment into a manufactured grouping created by the imagination of the writer. When a periodical or pamphlet enunciates the public will, it is in effect a command to the single reader to fall in line.

Democracy has in practice countered the authoritarian bias of its publicists by keeping alive the ancient art of discussion. In millions of primary groups throughout the country men and women talk over and around the spate of opinion, commands, and information that assault their ears. Organized discussion

is to all intents and purposes the main educational weapon of the fully grown citizen. The arts of communication have now reached the point where it is possible to question the supremacy of the printed word as a stimulant to discussion. Films and radio occupy a considerable portion of the modern imagination. Are they, perhaps, not more malleable tools to further the group activities proper to social education?

The art of motion pictures, according to Benoît-Levy,<sup>1</sup> was forged as a medium of information. Its later submersion in the entertainment craft is, in this author's eyes, accidental and temporary. It is certainly true that the documentary and informational film in all its forms has shown a marked resurgence. With the spread of cheap projectors for the use of 16mm film, the motion picture can now be used by small groups for their own purposes. During the war the armed services worked out programs for the use of training and amusement films by scattered units in makeshift quarters that could serve as a pattern for the decentralization of the film industry. The major question remaining to be solved is what are the needs of primary groups for films. Do they offer suitable shortcuts to the supply of wanted information? Are they reliable stimulants to group discussion and judgment?

The answers to these questions are being sought in practical terms by a film forum movement that has been spreading throughout all types of communities since the close of the war. Libraries, YMCA's,

<sup>1</sup> *The Art of the Motion Picture* by Jean Benoît-Levy, Coward McCann, New York, 1946.

churches, public forums, schools, trade unions, and clubs have created discussion groups centered round the showing of films. The popularity of this movement indicates that it meets some substantial need.

The heart of this new technique in popular communication is that a purposeful group share impressions of a situation as a common experience. Viewing the film together they are able to discuss the topics suggested as a participating group, linked by common reactions to intellectual and emotional impressions. Bias and distortion in subject presentation are as likely to arouse as subdue critical judgment. If the main factors in a topic are encompassed on the screen, discussion can take on some of the live qualities that would result from the witnessing of actual events.

The scope of this movement will, of course, depend in the first place on the character and quantity of the documentary and informational films produced. This in turn must depend upon the organized demand met by enterprising producers. In the field of world affairs there has been a considerable amount of courageous experiment by both educational and commercial bodies. One of their greatest difficulties, however, has been to find means to get their products known to the scattered groups of potential users.

The evaluation and cataloguing of suitable discussion films in a manner that will make them available to local groups is a task that has been long overdue. Without guidance of this character the primary group has either to flounder through an expensive trial and error process or undertake research work beyond its

capacities. This educational service has to be conceived on a national basis, with sound academic standards of evaluation and a working knowledge of the customer groups.

The Institute of Adult Education of Teachers College, Columbia University, has endeavored to fill this gap in the publication of a quarterly *Film Forum Review*. The issue for Spring, 1947 covers the field of International Relations. From a list of over two hundred films, forty-six were evaluated as acceptable for discussion purposes and a brief summary and comment given. Program building on this subject is thus made practicable for the local group who can start from the results obtained by a research organization.

Practical problems of film distribution and the creation of film libraries are being tackled by organizations such as the Educational Film Library Association, the Film Council of America, and the Motion Picture Bureau of the YMCA. The Library of Congress has announced that it will become the clearing-house for information concerning the distribution of all government films. An effort is also being made to organize local film councils to stabilize distribution.

The use of documentary films to convey direct impressions to be resolved in discussions can be accounted a grass roots movement. The showing of films attracted audiences, creating spontaneous discussion groups where the older techniques had failed. The range of visual presentation is generally greater than the spoken or written word for the average group.

There can be little doubt that this movement is capable of considerable expansion.

As in the case of other gropings of primary groups towards effectual means of better judgments, organization lags well behind desire. Some of the necessary research work is done by academic or private foundations; independent experiments are made in the field, but the social machinery intended to represent the primary groups on a national scale remains passive. Neither the national churches, women's club movement, organized labor, or commerce have made much effort to make the new techniques available to their member groups at least in the sphere of world affairs. In this as in everything else the work of the expert information gatherer and arranger is blocked from the primary group by the inertia of national bodies who have monopolized the title of representatives. Perhaps the independence of the documentary film is one of the principal causes of its lack of appeal to central headquarters. It cannot be tidied up into a simple message, an appeal or direction on how to think from leaders to followers. As a direct educational instrument its use depends on an understanding of the democratic process not yet achieved by many of the semi-political organizations seeking to integrate primary groups.

## II.

Radio, up to the present, has served principally as an echo of opinion on world affairs, as a powerful supplement to the newspaper or periodical. The commentator has developed his following and fallen, perhaps, captive to the need to please a mass audience. Despite occasional word pictures of exceptional appeal, new techniques for public enlightenment have not been conspicuous in the development of the radio industry.

As long as a mass audience is the target of broadcasting, educational objectives must remain incidental. The masses as a unit may be trained or indoctrinated by use of the appropriate skills; their education, however, is a social process that can only be accomplished in terms of their component groups.

The growth of broadcasting techniques to further popular understanding of world affairs will then depend on the capacity of radio to serve the self-organized group. This is a subject of which little is known. The family is the one social unit where group listening may be safely assumed. With regard to other social formations, a study some years old indicates

that the number of organized listening groups in America may amount to 15,000.<sup>1</sup>

To influence the understanding of world affairs, broadcasting needs an audience, organized for group discussion of its message whether it be one of fact or opinion. There is at present little incentive to the commercial broadcasting companies to cater for this vague possibility.

Production techniques on the other hand do exist to meet discussion needs. The Chicago Round Table, sponsored by the University of Chicago, has created a valuable method of presentation of world and domestic issues. Expert debate on a chosen topic is followed up by publication in a pamphlet containing reading lists and additional material unsuitable for broadcasting. America's Town Meeting of the Air has also developed this technique enlisting at times several thousand listener groups to make use of its services.

The way to dramatize authentic information on the air has been competently explored. The content of what should be presented has not and cannot be solved until audiences with specific needs to be met are fully organized. Radio as an instrument of education in world problems suffers from its accident of growth from the top down. The network system confines it within the limits of the mass media, renders it an instrument too ponderous to be adapted to the local uses of small groups. As this, however, may be

<sup>1</sup> *Radio's Listening Groups* by F. E. Hill and W. E. Williams, Columbia University Press, 1941, page 38.



a temporary condition of the industry, it is worth glancing at possible educational uses of decentralized broadcasting.

Under certain conditions the local radio station could become the sounding board of the community on matters of general interest to primary groups. Each group having tackled an issue of world affairs from its own particular angle requires to have its views and judgments corrected by intergroup discussion. A community viewpoint, proper to a whole citizen, must be welded from the narrower aspects of economic or social character. In practice intergroup forums are hard to arrange and clumsy to manage.

Radio offers a modern simplification by permitting the champions of each group to carry out the discussion in the hearing if not presence of all the members. It introduces the principle of representation into the educational life of primary groups. There is no reason why every moderate-sized community should not be capable of adapting the principle of the Chicago Round Table to its own neighborhood. A minister, labor leader, women's club representative, and businessman might not constitute expert opinion on the facts but they would represent clear views on local reaction to the problem as it touched the community's interests.

The technique of radio then offers a further step in the creation of representative community opinion on world affairs. It is a step that can be taken only on the initiative of the primary groups themselves. When they have organized discussion among their own

members they will seek to test their collective views against those of their equals in community life. The ampitheatre of the air provides a comfortable substitute for a gathering of all the citizenry.

### III.

The use of new techniques whether of film, radio, or discussion is linked to the ability of primary groups to achieve a wider unity in community organization. Methods of cooperation for local action will determine the power of the small group to enlarge its viewpoint to encompass issues set by world affairs. If the means of determining and furthering community interest are still lacking, national and world problems will have to wait. The criterion for judgment and social action is evolved from a consciousness of neighborhood solidarity.

The proper center in every type of community to link the interest of various primary groups in world affairs has not yet been uncovered. Tradition has given religion the church, and domestic politics the party, but it has lacked time to create a like institution for the safeguarding of peace and security. These issues are newcomers, unwelcome to the American scene.

The school system, which has come of late to accept fuller responsibility for the informal education of citizens may be considered as one of the potential can-

didates for the role of integrating center. In California where generous physical plants exist, the State has made possible widespread use of the school as a focus for community learning and discussion. Public forums of which the locality bears one-third and the State two-thirds of the cost have become important features of community life. During the year 1945-46 nearly one thousand forum meetings were held attracting an attendance of approximately two hundred thousand. Of the eighty-seven general topics discussed in forum series, fifty-four were on international affairs. This movement has given Californian communities a rallying point for general discussion of the effect of world problems on their interests. Similar experiments with perhaps less generous financial support are being made in an increasing number of states.

The community library is another possible rallying point. Here is neutral territory publicly supported but generally unvexed by partisan issues. In its inception the public library was intended to meet community needs for information on national and international affairs. With the growth of films, non-commercial radio, and television, it is possible that the library will have to widen its custodianship extensively to fulfill its original task. An undertaking of this nature requires renewed community support for specific ends.

A two-year survey financed by the Carnegie Corporation is at present being conducted on how well existing public libraries are serving American communities. This examination proposed by the American

Library Association is one of the steps being taken by librarians to engage as active agents in community education. Another important tendency fostered by the Library Association is to integrate library activities with programs of other national agencies in the field of international understanding. The local library, belonging in every sense to community life, offers a profitable channel between the needs of primary groups and the information gathering activities of national bodies.

Perhaps the most hopeful development for the better organization of community interests in world affairs as in domestic matters is the growth of the community council movement. The councils may be described as representative gatherings of major civic groups or interests to further the extrapolitical business of the community. In many cases they take the somewhat narrower form of adult education councils. Their field of action is the cultural and recreational life of the neighborhood.

The importance of these bodies lies in the fact that they are self-organized democratic units reflecting the immediate will of primary groups. They are capable of integrating community purposes from within, of presenting a front of social unity to the impact of outside influences. Their weakness, of course, is that they are mere creatures of interest and goodwill tossed about by the more powerful forces of politics, money, and power.

Despite the tenuous base of these councils, they

have shown sturdy signs of growth. They provide in part at least some escape for inarticulate interest groups from overefficient control by centralized bodies of their thoughts and acts. They are a return to local democracy in matters of leisure and understanding. In Michigan where they have been fostered by the State University, approximately one hundred and seventeen councils have been formed for all types of community. It is interesting that eighty per cent of the councils serve small communities of under five thousand people.<sup>2</sup>

The mortality rate of these councils is generally high as they suffer from a certain isolation from the main currents of social organization in the nation. There is as yet no integrated community council movement to provide moral and social support as in the corresponding case of women's clubs. Their local and democratic basis is in some sense a challenge to the agencies who seek to organize primary groups on a national rather than environmental level.

For the furtherance of the understanding of world affairs, however, a local democracy of learning remains one of the most urgent requirements. The community council fulfills the need of a self-organized channel for the flow of information from the research worker to active groups in the field. It can state the needs of the community for information of a certain

<sup>2</sup> Progress Report on A Study of the Causes for the Survival and Mortality Rate of Community Councils in Michigan by Cynthia M. Jones, published in *Inter-Council Newsletter* April, 1947. Institute of Adult Education.

character and form with unsurpassed authority. National agencies promoting understanding of world affairs would be well advised to court the community council system, fostering it where possible and making the fullest use of its present facilities.

## SUMMARY

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## SUMMARY

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The impact of world affairs on the ordering of American life calls for a new effort towards democracy. Fresh dangers and unaccustomed strains have to be brought under popular control. To regain full mastery of his destiny the citizen must now take his place in a forum to decide the issues of mankind. Either the democratic process will enlarge itself to deal with relations between the nation and the world or it will prove unsuited to the care of freedom.

A total problem of this character can hardly be resolved by any single means. Education is a useful instrument of democracy but it is one instrument and nothing more. All the tools of social power, politics, and economics as well as learning must work together for the preservation of individual freedom in this centripetal age. The first step then for the institutional forms of education is to discover a social base adapted to the actualities of modern life.

It has been suggested in this study that informal education, the process of civic learning, should concern itself more with the self-organized primary group. In the serving of such groups education might

shed some of its authoritarian, didactic character carried over from its association with the training of the young. More important perhaps, is the likelihood that the forms of education are needed to provide full social expression to these groups.

At present the primary group, rooted in its local environment, receives distorted representation in the fields of politics, economics, and culture. National bodies from political parties to labor unions manipulate through partial desires and unclear feelings the mass opinions of the basic groupings. The virtue of clear understanding would give the primary group mastery over the institutions of society. It would seem the peculiar function of education to supply this power.

As servants and guardians of the integrity of primary groups educational institutions would have to renounce the itch for social power. Action lies in the field of politics and economics. The nurturing of understanding must be kept separate from the formation of policy if men are to remain free in their minds. Learning must never be distorted into social guidance towards the establishment of a preconceived order.

In bridging the gap between Main street and the world, education will have to acknowledge itself an aid to thinking, not a revelation of wisdom. The right of the primary group when possessed of full information to decide for itself on a course of action is basic to the functioning of democracy. The task of the educator is to place the needed information in the proper hands against all opposition political or social.

In treating of education as a unified movement with concrete aims and standards the facts of American life are probably being distorted. It is worth considering that American education is not yet organized as a social force, at least when compared with politics, business or religion. The mushroom growth of public schools and state universities has eclipsed the fact that schooling is only one part of an educational system. Continuous social learning should be granted equal importance. Schooling, however, has monopolized the educational profession leaving only a small aristocracy of independent scholars to represent the larger whole. From the point of view of social progress the educational function remains unsystematized and neglected.

It would seem unfair to appeal to the semi-state functionary in school or university to provide an informational base for public opinion on world relations. The schoolmaster is not expected to do this in domestic politics and like conflicts of social interest dispute the field of foreign affairs. If primary groups are to receive educational aid in facing their problems, assistance must come from resources of social learning as yet unsystematized.

The adult education movement in America lacks an institutional base. Conceivably it may fall in the future into the state pattern devised by Scandinavian countries. Before that can happen, however, the United States will have to alter the character of its democracy by limiting social ideals of a free economy. In the meantime institutional life in America is un-

curbed and competitive. Where the educational function has failed to materialize in concrete form other institutions, the lobbyist, the fanatic, the advertising industry have filled the gap.

It is questionable whether there can be any serious hope of informed, popular judgment on relations with the world until institutions are framed to serve primary groups with educational content. The institutions which do exist to represent primary groups, churches, Chambers of Commerce, women's clubs, labor unions possess incalculable social power. They exercise this power for the most part in that background of politics and economics termed by them social action. Educational responsibility towards their constituent groups receives casual and imperfect recognition. Organization for understanding lags far behind the managerial skills used to capture political power or financial advantages.

Short of the severe discipline of social revolution, present institutions must be used to further popular understanding. The basic pattern of primary groups is native to the country and their methods of winning representation in national life cannot be altered by anything short of dictatorial force. An educational function, however, can be added to these bodies when their leadership hears and heeds the demand for information. Present disquiets concerning peace and security are hastening such demands; it is possible that their force may be felt on many national headquarters before adequate machinery to meet them has been planned.

The independent scholar in his institutions, the research foundation, and educational association, has a key part to play in converting the power bodies representing primary groups into educational instruments. As curators of unbiased information and sound techniques of learning, scholarly bodies bear the onus of proving the social value of these instruments to primary groups in the field. They are called upon to make a case for education as a step towards solidarity of group feeling. Their potential clients, the great national bodies, will distribute their wares only when they have become convinced that they will achieve freedom and power for their constituent groups.

The gap between purpose and achievement is in part at least the fault of scholarly bodies. Lacking a common voice their dispersed whispers cannot be heard above the hurly-burly of the daily struggle. If it is important that the public in its natural formations hear the facts concerning their relationships with the world, this task should bring together all the major sources of information in a joint effort. The National Association of Manufacturers is not backward in voicing the public claims of manufacture, and peace should show like powers of organization to win the public ear.

Scholarship is called upon in this instance to declare learning an independent social power, to free the education of the citizen from the play of politics or the necessities of economics. The idea that popular understanding is as necessary to democracy as free elections must be given institutional form. The educa-

tional function in social life needs to be personified by actual bodies organized on terms of equality with the other claimants to social power.

Purpose is the main incentive to practical organization and the realization of a common responsibility to promote popular understanding should bring together the dispersed forces of educational action. One of the present barriers to unity and joint effort is a simple lack of faith. The world of learning is bemused by the success of the opinion makers. It has come to doubt whether its own standards of free judgment on the facts can be applied to society in general.

This shrinking from the implications of democracy, this craven homage paid to trickery and noise undermines the will of scholarship to claim its proper place in modern society. If the art and craft of advertising persuasion is a workable substitute for learning, then scholarship is a private luxury. If not, and history and reason join in rejecting this gross assumption, learning must compete vigorously and openly with its illegitimate rival for the public mind.

A parliament of educators stout-hearted enough to challenge the autocratic will of political state and economic baronage is an institution needed for the preservation of democracy. The constituents of this body exist already in the primary groups, their national organizations, and the host of educational agencies. An act of leadership is required, the vision of some Simon de Montford, to unite these social forces in a living institution.

In the special field of world affairs, an assembly of

scholars and educators to represent learning as against the anarchy of prejudice and inspired opinion is almost a fact. The National Commission for UNESCO gave form if not substance to such a body. A paper constitution is there if only it would march.

The function of unified scholarship would be to give institutional form to the demands of primary groups for exact information. Standards of information gathering and methods of distribution are matters for educational rulemaking. The carriers of information, national agencies for primary groups, need a single authority before which they can present their plans and to whom they can look for aid.

Organization for public learning, however, runs counter to many trends in our culture. Institutions lacking the driving force of profit or social power are delicate growths in the jungle of our competitive commercialism. The furthering of public understanding today rests on good will, on a desire to serve the community without reward, on a belief in the obligations of citizens to one another within a democracy. These virtues are hardly the main attributes of social success for either individuals or institutions under present-day conditions.

A shift in social values would seem prerequisite to real efforts towards public enlightenment. Our dominant strains which are frankly greed and lust of power will not wither away before a breath of pure benevolence. They are likely to run their course as they have done in past civilizations till they threaten the basis of all ordered living.



Perhaps that moment is closer in modern America than it has ever been.

The accumulation of power in the United States has made all other peoples dependent on the whims and manners of American citizens. Some of the other nations are well-armed, truculent, and jealous, willing to smash the world if need be to contest American superiority. Personal safety has become an issue overshadowing the quest for personal aggrandizement.

In face of danger daily growing more real, the willingness of citizens to organize to control their own destiny becomes more likely. The nature that this organization takes, whether it be the panic abandonment of liberties to a militaristic state, or a revival of democratic judgment and control, will prove the final test of the American character.

While waiting this momentous decision, scholars and people of good will have some small part to play in its making. They can renew their contacts with the primary groups that lie at the heart of democracy, proclaim standards of information as against forced opinions, and finally discipline themselves into united bodies capable of speaking with equal voice in the council of national institutions.

## AGENCIES LISTED

American Association for the United Nations  
American Association of University Women  
American Association of University Women, International Relations Study Groups  
American Library Association  
American Peace Society  
American Society for International Law  
Brookings Institution  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
Catholic Association for International Peace  
Citizens Committee for United Nations Reform  
Church Peace Union  
Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
Council on Foreign Relations  
Council for Social Action, Congregation Christian Churches  
Council on World Affairs, Cleveland  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of State  
East and West Association  
Foreign Policy Association  
General Federation of Women's Clubs  
Institute of Pacific Relations  
Joint Council for International Co-operation, New England  
League of Women Voters  
National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
National Committee on Atomic Information  
National Farmers Union  
National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs  
National Planning Association  
Pan American Institute  
Public Affairs Committee  
Southern Council on International Relations  
Teachers of International Law and Related Subjects  
United World Federalists  
Western Policy Committee, Iowa  
Woodrow Wilson Foundation  
Workers Education Bureau of America  
World Affairs Council, Rhode Island  
World Peace Foundation of Massachusetts •



